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WORSHIPPING CHILDREN

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STORIES AND ADDRESSES

BY THE LATE REV.

J. G. STEVENSON

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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I

HIS MOTHER'S HYMN

THERE is a most interesting book recently issued and written by Mr. G. A. Leask and called "The Story of our Hymns." It is full of stories about many hymns we all know well, and while most of these stories are for grown-ups, several are the kind little people like to hear. This is one of the latter. One day some people came to a minister and said that in a hospital near by there was a soldier who was very, very ill. Indeed, they thought he was dying, and they asked the minister to go and speak to him, and remind him of Jesus who makes all who trust Him fearless of death. Of course, the good minister went, but the poor,

ill soldier was rude to him. He said he could die quite well without any minister interfering; and when the pastor pleaded with him kindly he just relapsed into sulks and spoke never a word. Of course, the minister had to leave him, and when he called again the next day the soldier was no more polite. As soon as he saw his visitor he turned his face to the wall, and, of course, there was no misunderstanding this. But the minister knew that ill people often, for all sorts of reasons, behave worse than they mean to, and besides, he had patience, and was very anxious to tell the dying man about his Lord. So to try and attract his attention the minister decided to sing.

As many pages of Mr. Leask's book show, the right hymn at the right time will often appeal to people's better nature, and feeling sure God was guiding him, the minister began to sing the hymn which begins :—

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labours have an end
In peace and joy and Thee ?

Quietly the good minister sang the verses, and as he sang the poor soldier turned his face round. His whole countenance changed, and great tears came into his eyes.

"Who taught you that ?" he asked at last.

"Who taught me ?" echoed his friend. "Who taught me ? Why, my mother."

Again the soldier was silent for a minute, but this time his silence was not due to sulks.

"So did mine. My mother taught me the same hymn when I was a boy," came his broken words as soon as he could find his voice. Into his dimmed eyes there came a great shining, all sulks went. He listened eagerly and gratefully to all the minister had to tell him of the love of that Jesus, who leads at the last to the New Jerusalem

all who love Him and put their trust in Him.

The memory of the hymn his mother had taught him made the soldier behave as he ought to behave. How many hymns has mother taught you? "God make my life a little light," "Looking upward every day," "I think when I read that sweet story of old"; these and many others have been taught by many mothers to children, and sometimes when father is listening he thinks your hymns are finer than any singing he ever heard from a cathedral choir. When you are tempted to behave sulkily, or do other things you ought not, or say things that displease Jesus, do you ever remind yourself of any hymns mother has taught you?

Of course, you will probably never be a soldier who dies in hospital and is rude to a minister; but now and then remembering a line of one of mother's hymns would often

make a difference. "God make my life a little staff, whereon the weak may rest," would sometimes help you to help others when you feel lazy and do not care for the trouble of helping. "Give gentle answers back again, and fight a battle for our Lord," would sometimes cure spitfires—and they all need curing. Then parts of other hymns would help at other times. Try and think of some.

II

THE PRINCE'S TEMPER

THIS is the story of how a very important young boy was helped to conquer his temper; and of course other children who know of anybody with a temper may perhaps glean from it hints for improvement. The young hero of this story was born well over two hundred years ago in France. His grand-

father was Louis XIV., known as the Grand Monarque, and was one of the most notable kings who ever sat on the throne of France; and the little boy himself was called Louis, Duke of Burgundy. He had two younger brothers, one of whom was known as the Duke of Anjou and the other the Duke of Berri, but people thought much more of him because, being the eldest, he was expected to come to the throne on some day after both his grandfather and his father were dead. Unfortunately the young man had the most terrible temper that ever was. He just loved his own way. Royal children do not always have the same chances of being good as ordinary boys and girls, because folk round about them are more inclined to spoil them; and lots of servants and people deferring to them, and too many fine clothes and too many fine things to eat all combine together to make them think a lot of themselves and to help them

to imagine that they can do exactly as they wish.

Louis, Duke of Burgundy, was hindered by all that ever helped a prince to be naughty; and yet all these together do not account for his passionate nature, which was beyond everything most people were prepared to believe until they knew him. When he was told not to do anything an angry spirit in him always rose and made him want to do the forbidden thing tremendously, even though before he had not particularly wished to attempt anything of the sort. Any resistance made him so perfectly furious that his face became all red and his eyes shone, and he stamped and behaved all sorts of wrong ways at once. When the time came for lessons he did not want to do, he would actually smash the clock which struck the hour. This did not make anyone near him think he was a particularly nice boy; and those who knew him had no nicer thoughts

about him when the weather was not fine, for if he very much wanted to go outside and the rain prevented, he would say things about the falling drops and would fly into the wildest rage because the day was not dry. All this was made worse because his mother was the kind of princess who took very little notice of her own children, while his father, being heir to the throne of France, was not expected by anyone to have much to do with his boy. So Louis was left to servants who bowed to him a great deal and did nearly everything he wanted, and then said behind his back what a horrid little fellow he was and how glad they were they had not got his nasty temper.

Of course, prince though he was, lots of people expostulated with the boy from time to time, and always they were told what he thought of them in return. The boy had a very biting tongue and was satirical and clever, and had quite a gift for making

malicious fun of anyone who displeased him. So few people were encouraged by his sweetness to rebuke the young fury a second time. Of course, his brothers, even though they were younger, did what brothers always do, and tried sometimes to keep him in order. But he was older and stronger than they, and besides, he despised them and told them they were just links between his greatness and those inferior folk, ordinary nobles and common people. So at last it became inevitable to try and get him a tutor who, beside teaching him ordinary lessons, would explain to him how necessary it is for children to try and be good. The Dauphin, his father, made all sorts of inquiries, and at last he heard of a young clergyman whose name was Fénelon and who seemed likely to be the right kind of teacher for his boy. It was, of course, a question as to how young Louis would receive him, but his father decided to engage the young clergyman,

and one day the news was broken to Louis, Duke of Burgundy, heir to the throne of France, and full of bad temper and all kinds of importance, that someone was coming to live with him to help him to be better.

III

THE COMING OF FÉNELON

THE quaintest thing that the people at Court knew about the new tutor of little Louis, Duke of Burgundy, was that at the age of fifteen he had preached so well that a congregation of his friends broke into applause. Then after that, to save him from getting conceited, he had been sent where he was taught how to grow up an upright Christian gentleman; and after becoming a clergyman, he had thought a great deal about the most helpful methods of education. When he was

introduced to his new pupil, Louis, of course, looked at him a great deal and thought the kind of things inside that children always think about a new master. They had ordinary lessons together; and of course the new tutor had a great deal to say also about Jesus Christ and about religion. Naturally, it was not very long before Louis showed off his temper; and, to the amazement of the boy, his tutor showed no sign whatever of getting cross with him in return. He did not even seem surprised. He just looked at the little fury as if he were sorry for him; and he puzzled the boy by saying absolutely nothing. Later on, when Louis had left off being cross, he told him how wrong it was to allow anger to conquer and he pleaded with him to try and do better. The little prince did not welcome this kind of talk, but when you know you have been wrong and people, instead of blowing you up sky high, speak quite nicely, it is really not very

easy to be naughty again at once. So little as he liked being blamed, the prince somehow put up with what the young clergyman said to him. He even listened with patience when, in quite a cheerful way, his tutor told him of encouraging methods of trying to conquer temper, and he was secretly quite pleased when once, after he had forgotten to be cross for a time, his tutor noticed and praised him for not getting angry.

Besides helping him in all the ways that have just been told about, his tutor often told him stories; and he even wrote fables and dialogues on purpose for the prince and gave them to him to read. One of these fables was called "La Fantasque." Children who do not know French will not go far wrong if they translate the title as "Master Whimsical." The fable was about a boy called Melanthus; and these are some extracts from it. There were fifty verses, and not one of them can have been very nice read-

ing for a small boy with a bad temper. But judge for yourselves. "What has happened to Melanthus?" ran the beginning of the fable. "Nothing from outside. Everything from within. His affairs go smoothly, everybody looks out for the chance of pleasing him. What's the matter, then? . . . There was a wrinkle in his stocking this morning, and we shall all have to suffer for it. . . . He seeks all occasions to contradict, to make complaint, to exasperate all about him, and then frets that his resentments do not provoke them. . . . If his companions do not talk, their silence is affected and offensive. If they whisper, he imagines they speak against him. If they speak too loudly, he feels they talk too much, and are too gay while he is sad. . . . How shall we prevent these outrages? It cannot be done. We have no almanac good enough to predict the bad weather. . . . He vents his passion on the first that comes. . . . He

freely owns his accusations all unjust. . . . After this farce is over at his own expense, you might well imagine he'd never play the madman again. Alas! you're taken in! He'll act it over again to-night." No one can read this without being sorry for all children who have much of Melanthus in them; and very often Fénelon was sorry enough for the boy he was teaching. But writing fables that strike home never yet by itself cured a bad temper; and the tutor had to think of some other ways of helping Louis which were not half so nice as reading stories written on purpose for him. Fénelon told all the servants who waited on the prince that they were to do exactly as he ordered whenever the boy was cross; and as a result of what he said to them secretly, Louis was always made to feel that his exhibitions of temper were far from welcome. The moment he became angry no one spoke to him at all; and even if he asked questions

not a single servant ever replied to him. If he became furious at meal times, all the servants used to look away from him as though it hurt them to keep their eyes on something unpleasant. When they had to do anything for him they somehow made him feel that they considered he was out of his mind and must be treated with the care wise people accord to madmen. This kind of treatment was always kept up until the prince behaved better and said he was sorry for being bad tempered. Thus by degrees the boy was induced to really try hard to fight against his whole nature; and yet again and again bad temper got the better of him, and there were often battles royal between him and his tutor.

IV

THE RUDENESS OF LOUIS

One day Louis did something very wrong; and after a time his tutor rebuked him very quietly and without any anger on his own part. But the prince was determined not to be corrected; and he was silly enough to tell himself that no mere clergyman had the right to rebuke a prince. So when he heard what was meant to help him, his face flushed, and he answered angrily, "No, no, sir. I know who I am and who you are." This was his way of saying that his tutor had better remember to whom he was speaking, and had better understand that ordinary people have no right to try and teach a prince anything. His foolish words were not nice hearing for Fénelon, but instead of getting provoked in his turn, the tutor

answered him not at all; and, though he was in no way sulky, for the rest of the day Fénelon said absolutely nothing to his pupil. Yet, of course, all the time he was trying to devise some new way of helping the boy to be good. So next morning he got up early and went to the room of the prince before his pupil was out of bed. Then he spoke to him stiffly and ceremoniously, and said in tones altogether different from usual: "I do not know, monsieur, whether you remember what you said to me yesterday, that you knew what you are, and what I am, but it is my duty to teach you ignorance alike of both." This cannot have been a very welcome morning message for a boy who was sleepy and altogether ashamed of himself for the way he had behaved the day before. But there was worse to come. "You," went on the tutor, "fancy yourself a greater personage than I. Some of your servants may have told you so. But, since

you oblige me to do it, I must tell you without hesitation that I am greater than you." This was really quite news to the prince, but Fénelon soon made his words good. "You must," he explained, "see at once that there can be no question of birth in the matter. You would consider him a mad man who should take to himself any credit because the rains of heaven had watered his crops, while those of his neighbour withered; and it would be no wiser to be vain of your birth, which adds not one tittle to your personal merit." Such words were not very comforting for a prince who was out-and-out proud of being what he was; and soon his tutor went on to make him feel he was very inferior. "You can have no doubt but that I am your superior in understanding and knowledge. You know nothing but what I have taught you, and that is a mere shadow compared with what you have yet to learn. As to authority, you have none over me,

whereas I, on the contrary, have a full and entire authority over you . . . and to convince you of this truth I am now going to take you to his Majesty and beg him to appoint someone else whose care of you will, I hope, be more successful than mine."

The threat was terrible. The prince had said an evening's prayer and had done a little thinking before sleep time since he had lost his temper so dreadfully; and his pride made the lad sensitive to the prospect of public disgrace. Besides, he was afraid of what his grandfather might say to him. Further, he really loved Fénelon, and he knew also that Fénelon was the only person in the world who really loved him. Altogether, Louis broke down completely, and began to cry big tears that told not of rage but of penitence. "Oh, monsieur," he pleaded, "I am so sorry for what I said yesterday. . . . What will people think if you leave me? I

promise, oh, I promise ever so much that you shall not have to complain of me if only you will promise not to go!" The tutor by now was really very sorry for him, but Louis had said that kind of thing too often for him to be over-impressed. So he knew that he must not give him pardon so easily; and for the moment he refused to speak any word of forgiveness or to say anything that meant he would even dream of setting aside his threat. All day the young Duke of Burgundy was miserable and afraid, because at any minute he expected to be taken before his grandfather and scolded and punished very severely.

V

THE TESTING OF THE DAUPHIN

LOUIS was, however, never taken before his grandfather. Someone interceded for him, and Fénelon agreed to remain with his pupil. His agreeing gave him more influence than ever; and he taught the boy more and more successfully to think a great deal about Jesus, to take Him as his model, to fight against his temper, to think what was happening when angry passions rose and to try and check them instead of letting them have their way with him. So by degrees the prince improved, and people began to say that really he was not so-bad tempered after all. Every week the lad got better. Then a terrible thing happened. After six years' tuition, Fénelon had to leave him. But before he went he urged the boy to

remember all he had taught him, and also he promised to write to him, and said he was never to leave him out of his prayers. All this encouraged Louis to go on conquering his temper. And he did so well that people began to love him and to say how wonderful it was that by the grace of God, and the teaching of Fénelon and much trying hard, he had changed so splendidly.

After he was a man, people who had known him earlier used sometimes to remind one another of the awful temper that once was his, and used to say that now scarcely anyone in the world controlled himself so well. This was great praise, but on one memorable occasion he deserved it thoroughly. His grandfather was dead, and because his father was King, he was by now Dauphin and heir to the throne. Also he was an officer; and when in 1708 the French army entered on a campaign, he was put nominally at its head, though, because of his youth and

for other reasons, an old general called the Duke of Vendôme was really its commander. This Duke of Vendôme was nasty and bad tempered, and hated being bothered with the Dauphin, and at every chance he got he treated him with an insulting air of superiority. The prince ignored his unkindness. Because of his indolence and incapacity, the Duke of Vendôme lost the Battle of Oudenarde ; and after he was beaten he called a number of other military experts round him and asked them what he ought to do. Of course, everybody waited for the Dauphin to speak first ; and when he said a couple of words, the Duke of Vendôme flamed up and insulted him publicly. Bystanders thought the one-time pupil of Fénelon would take his sword to the impudent general, but he kept absolute silence and did nothing of the sort. All the experts said that, as the battle had been lost, there was nothing for it but for the army to retreat. "Very

well," said the Duke of Vendôme, angrily, "I see you will all have it so—we must retreat." Then he turned spitefully to the Dauphin, and said, "Indeed, for long, Monseigneur, I know you have wished to do so."

This was like calling the Dauphin a coward, and hinting also at worse things, and the prince was inclined to get out-and-out angry. But once again he controlled himself and answered not a word; and all the bystanders marvelled at his patience and his command over his temper. People were thinking more and more of him when, less than four years afterwards, he was, together with his wife and son, carried away by a sudden epidemic; and long after he was buried, folk used to tell one another how he had conquered his temper. And the story has been re-told so that any British child who has need to strive as the prince had to strive, may understand clearly that

much looking to Jesus and much praying and much trying hard will enable him also to conquer bad temper.

VI

CONCERNING LESSONS

I SUPPOSE they have lessons at your school? Come to think of it, lessons are exactly what schools are for, though some children hardly seem to understand this. They had lessons at the synagogue school in Nazareth to which Jesus is sure to have been sent when a boy, bareheaded and wearing a white cotton gown. In those days no Jewish boy was sent to a school until he was six; and so before He went to school at all, Jesus will have learnt His letters from a Scripture scroll, He will have been able to read the shorter words, and He will have known

quite a number of verses of Scripture. The teacher in the synagogue school at Nazareth was a man Jesus had often seen helping in the Sabbath services. There were no school books; and the school-room had neither benches nor desks, but master and pupils sat on the ground, the children in a half circle facing their teacher. The master taught them long passages of Scripture, and by saying them aloud together, over and over again, they learnt them by heart. They were taught to read out of the Scriptures inscribed on long rolls; and the reading lesson was very difficult because the words had no vowels, but only consonants, and the little scholars had to think for themselves of the letters left out. When they were not reading or saying verses aloud, Jewish school children were sometimes learning to write, and perhaps when classes were over, Jesus practised writing with His finger in the dust of the ground. No boy in Naza-

reth learnt more than a very little arithmetic. When the boys at the synagogue school were naughty, the master used a strap to help them to behave better. When children did well at their lessons, the teacher sometimes praised them. There was once a Jewish boy who remembered so perfectly, that his teachers said he was like a cemented cistern, which did not lose a drop of water. Jesus was always good, and it is a pity we do not know what nice things His master said about Him.

VII

THE DIFFICULT SUMS

Children who really want to be like the Lad of Nazareth should work really hard at their lessons and do what they can to master them. Everybody knows that not

seldom lessons are really very hard; and if some children find it difficult to do what they are set they give up. Surely giving up easily cannot possibly be in any way right. Once upon a time there was a Scotch boy who lived in a country village and went to a country school; and always he had home lessons that were hard. But however hard they were he tried his best to do them; and when he had once started he never cared to stop until his work was done. One afternoon the master gave him three very difficult sums to take home; and after tea and the clearing of the table he got his slate and set to. The first two sums were very stiff, but by working carefully for a very long time he managed to get them right. Sum number three proved to be very difficult. The boy's mother and father went to bed early partly because the father's work compelled him to get up very early indeed. When his parents went to bed they left

their lad still bending over his slate and trying to do that third sum. After the room was out-and-out quiet the boy seemed to have an extra chance of success; but though he tried and tried and tried again at the sum he could not manage it. Still he stuck to his work, and he quite lost count of time as again and again he rubbed everything out and started afresh. At last he could see the sum was coming right, and just before he began the last line he heard a noise on the stairs. It was his father coming down; and when he entered the room the boy was surprised to see that he was fully dressed. "Why, father," asked the lad, "have you forgotten something?" His father stared at him in amazement. "What," he said, "still here! Forgotten something! Not I. It is you who have forgotten something." "What have I forgotten?" asked the boy, anxiously. "Why," replied his father, with a laugh, "you've forgotten to go to bed.

It is morning, and I've come down." The boy had worked the whole night through, and as he had worked so long he stopped and finished his sum. Whether he had breakfast before he went to bed or after a little sleep I do not know, but I do know that he was a great boy. When he worked he worked with a will. When he did lessons he put his whole heart into what he did. It would make rather a difference if all children who are listening were like him.

VIII

ALWAYS LEARNING

THE strange thing is that some children right away inside themselves have an idea that they can afford to do without lessons. Lessons are a great way of learning, and a number of children seem to imagine they

can know all it will be of any use for them to know without troubling to learn. Such an idea is out-and-out foolish. No one can afford to live without continually learning. Years and years ago, in the sixteenth century, a street in Italy was enlivened by the passing of a cardinal. As all wise children know, a cardinal is a prince of the Roman Church, a kind of extraordinarily important minister who has no one above him except the Pope. In Rome and in the sixteenth century they thought a great deal of cardinals, so as this particular cardinal walked through the streets all the men took off their hats, and some of the women knelt in the road and asked him to give them his blessing. As he went along he met an old man with a particularly noble face, and when the old man did him reverence he surprised those who watched by stopping to speak to him. "Whither goest thou?" asked the prince of the Church.

"My lord cardinal," was the respectful reply of the old man, "I go to the school of sculpture." The cardinal smiled to show he was interested in the answer. Then he asked again, "And wherefore goest thou to the school of sculpture?" "My lord," was the reply of the noble old man, "I go to the school of sculpture to learn." When he had said farewell, away went the old man to the school of sculpture, and a small Italian boy, who had seen and heard what you have just been told, said to his mother, "Mother of mine, it seems to me strange that so old a man should want to learn." "Child," answered his mother, "it is even stranger than you think. The noble old gentleman is Michel Angelo, the great sculptor. Many people say that he is not only the greatest sculptor living, but the greatest sculptor the world will ever see." The boy remained quiet for at least a minute and a half, for he was thinking how strange it was that so

great a sculptor should still be learning. Then he spoke anew. "Mother of mine," said the boy, "if a noble old gentleman like Michel Angelo still keeps on learning, I think a boy like me ought to learn all he can." "You are right, my son," said the lad's mother, "and there is something more. Michel Angelo learnt much from a great servant of God whose name was Savonarola. From him Michel Angelo learnt to follow the Holy Jesus; and, though he is now very old, Michel Angelo is still learning to be good."

IX

WORSHIPPING CHILDREN

It was the hour of the worshipping children; and big Gerald and little Olive, and Cyril with the reddish hair, and Miriam with the curls, and Jim who was not fond of washing,

and Jim's cousin, Kathie, and lots of other boys and girls—they were all there. The way they sang their first hymn was quite good; and the lesson was a passage from the gospels they had often heard, but that somehow sounded quite new because of the way it was read. Some of the smaller children had trouble about finding the next hymn, but everyone got it at last except a very little boy who was three and a half and only came because his big sister could not leave him at home. He held his hymn-book upside down and open at the wrong place. Also he sang a tune of his own and was quite happy. Once his tune was not finished when a verse was over, but no one minded his singing by himself. He finished the hymn at the same time as the others; and then came prayer.

All eyes were shut, many hands were clasped, and everybody bent forward. All the children tried to listen and to make the

words of the prayer their very own. But it was very hot, and Miriam with the curls had been out to a birthday party the night before. Birthday parties often mean tiredness the next day. So little by little, without knowing at all that she was wrong, Miriam left off attending properly and began to think of just nothing and became more and more drowsy. Last of all, she did what was not at all a nice thing during prayer time, and what just then was certainly not respectful to God. She went fast asleep.

As she leaned with her head on the arm that rested on the back of the bench in front, she dreamed a dream; and this is what she dreamt. She saw herself in what seemed like the inside of a vast white marble temple; and after the manner we know things in dreams she knew the temple was poised far above the world. Its dome was pierced, and through the piercings she could see the bluest of blue skies; and from below

there rose continually towards the temple a murmur and swell of sweet sounds it did Miriam's heart good to hear; and amid the welcome sounds she picked out something she was quite sure she had heard before. It was not exactly like what she had heard, but it was sufficiently like for her to hope that with a little thinking she would be able to tell where and when she had listened to it earlier. All her hoping did not tell her; and at last she felt she just must know where she was, and what the beautiful sounds were, and what in particular were the sounds she felt sure she had heard earlier. Outside dreams Miriam was not really good at asking questions. Always she hesitated, and often she felt that her throat was not quite right, and often she could not manage the right words. But just now she seemed in a place where it was easy for children to inquire as they wished. So she stopped an angel and asked.

"Little one," came the first answer, "this is the Hall of the Hearing of High Heaven. All the sounds that are welcome in Heaven pass through here on their way upwards." "And the sounds that seem to me so especially sweet?" asked Miriam. "I want to know what they are. I'm sure I've heard them before. Please do tell me." The angel smiled. "What pleases you so much," he explained, "is what pleases us all. Indeed, there is nothing that pleases the Heavenly Father more." "Yes," said Miriam, feeling awed by the last remark, "but what are those sounds?" "Why," said the angel, "what pleases you so much is the welcome murmur of the worshipping children of the world. Always somewhere children are worshipping God. There is no minute but some group of little ones are singing Him a hymn. There is no second but somewhere a child is kneeling in prayer. Why, evening prayers alone would suffice to keep up the music of

worshipping children. It is always evening somewhere in the world, and always at evening there are children washed and clean and tired, but happy, who kneel at their mother's knee and pray; and they are all listened to. You did not quite recognise what you heard, because in the Hall of the Hearing of High Heaven we hear the sound of children's prayers that are not spoken at all. The little people just pray quietly within themselves, and all prayers that come from the heart are heard."

At once Miriam thanked him, and said she was not very sharp not to have known before. Indeed, when she listened anew she was quite sure she heard more than once the tune of "We are but little children weak." And she smiled, because she was quite certain she heard the voice of the little boy who held his hymn-book upside down. The angel smiled as well because he was listening to just the same voice. "Please may I

walk about and see things ?" asked Miriam. "Go over there," said the angel. "Those are the Angels of Remembrance. You'll learn more about worshipping children." He pointed to a large marble table round which sat busy angels. Miriam went across to them, and busy as they were, no one was too occupied to take notice of her and everyone seemed glad to answer her questions.

But questions did not come until Miriam had seen what the angels were doing. Then she asked, because she simply could not understand. One angel was chiselling on a plate of gold. "I am recording," he said, "the prayer of a child who meant every word she prayed. She thought to Whom she was speaking. She realised what she was saying. She meant her prayer. It must be graven in letters of gold." A second angel was doing something that looked difficult, and resulted in black bars of music on

white marble. Miriam knew the notes one by one, but she had not yet learnt enough music to be sure of a tune. So she enquired about it. "It is," came the explanation, "the music of a Sunday School. All the scholars thought about the meaning of the hymn they were singing, and they sang their very best because they knew God was listening. When that happens we like to remember." Hearing this made Miriam do a lot of thinking, and for some reason or other she was in no hurry to ask her next question. But she saw an angel writing on a large piece of paper with a pen dipped in—What do you think? It was dipped in water. The sight so surprised her that she blurted out in a hurry her wish that he would explain. "Why!" said the angel. "This is quite simple. There are children who kind of half mean their hymn singing, and half listen to the Bible when it's read to them, and kind of half mean their prayers. They——"

But Miriam put her fingers to her ears because she did not want to hear any more. Next to this last angel was one who was writing on paper with a pen that had on it absolutely nothing at all. He made all the motions of writing, but there were no marks on the paper after he had written. Miriam was going to enquire from him, when suddenly she understood. The shock of understanding woke her with a start; and dreams can come to pass so quickly that the other boys and girls had not quite finished the Lord's Prayer. How do you think she joined in the remaining clauses?

X

ST. PANCRAS AND ST. FAITH

THERE was once a very great teacher called Tertullian, who said that "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." By this he meant that when people are prepared to die for what they believe to be true, God uses their faithfulness to help other people to accept their beliefs; and always this is applied especially to the Church of Jesus Christ. By their dying the martyrs have always helped other people to live for their Lord. People often forget that quite a number of the martyrs have been just children. Over fifteen hundred years ago there was born in Phrygia, to wealthy pagan parents, a little boy whom they named Pancratius. The boy's parents had him brought up as a worshipper of the false god Jupiter, and

many a time he will have seen some poor ox killed in a heathen temple with a great hammer and a knife so that it might be sacrificed to the god. One sad day the father of the boy Pancratius died, and he and his relatives and other friends, all clad in solemn black, later escorted the body to a place appointed for its burning. Bodies were burnt on a pile of wood known as a pyre; and because Pancratius was the son of the dead man he had to set the pyre ablaze with a torch. Since his father was dead he was really a very important boy, because there was so much money that belonged to him: and that he might be properly looked after an uncle took him away from Phrygia to Rome. This uncle was a Christian, and he told Pancratius that God is not some stern and irritable Jupiter, but a great loving Father Who claims all the boys and girls in the world as His own children. He was also told about Jesus Christ, and though

by now he was getting quite a big boy, he heard concerning Christianity with great surprise, for what he was told was news that was really new. Because he wished him to learn more about Jesus and Christians, his uncle had him taught by Marcellinus, the aged Pope, or Bishop, of Rome. Thus he heard much that all Christian children know about their Lord, and the heart of the boy swelled with love for Jesus, and he left off worshipping Jupiter and tried hard to live as a follower of the Master of all good children. To prove how much he was in earnest he asked to be baptized. This was really out-and-out brave, for the Emperor of Rome at that time was a certain Diocletian, a heathen, who was very bitter against Christians, and was having them persecuted and killed for being true to their Lord. So terrible was the persecution that the Christians of Rome had to meet for worship in secret places, and Marcellinus took his pupil

to services in long, dark passages called catacombs and situated far underneath the earth. These catacombs were the burial-places of dead Christians, and with the tombs round about them, living Christians all aglow with love for Jesus knelt in the dark together and prayed, or listened as by the light of a torch that cast strange shadows everywhere Marcellinus read part of a Gospel or a section of a letter of St. Paul to the people of Rome. Often when the worship hour was over the boy may have wandered, lamp in hand, through the long galleries, and have looked at the red and black paint epitaphs outside the tombs and have seen pictures of the Good Shepherd and of doves and of olive branches, and also monograms of Christ. The first time he noticed a painted palm branch and asked its special meaning he was told that often it marked where a martyr was buried; and again and again Pancratius may have made up his mind that

even if he were threatened with death for refusing to deny his Lord he would die rather than be unfaithful.

XI

BEFORE THE EMPEROR

THIS was a mighty decision for a boy of fourteen. But then the lad was a Christian, so his brave determining is not really surprising, and before long it was put to the proof. Someone told the Emperor Diocletian that the boy Pancratius who had so much money had become a Christian. The news angered him, and he ordered the boy to be sent for. When the messenger came, Pancratius prayed a great deal without any words, and tried hard not to be more frightened than he could help, and passed the soldiers at the palace gate with his head

erect, and so was conducted by an officer into the presence of the great Emperor. At the sight of his sovereign Pancratius bowed low. But the Emperor, taking scarcely any notice of his politeness, spoke to him angrily, and asked him many questions, and at last he said, "Pancratius, you shall be killed at once unless you sacrifice to Jupiter." This, of course, was just terrible, and many of those who were watching expected to hear the boy say that he would do anything rather than face the pains of death. But Pancratius knew that true Christians never behave in that sort of way; and he spoke up for his Lord and for his faith. "I, sire," he said, "am a Christian, and I am ready to die. For Christ, our Master, inspires the souls of His servants, even young as I am, with courage to suffer for His sake." The face of the Emperor became sterner as he listened. So much did the courage of Pancratius anger him that he would not even

speak to him again. He made those who were round about him know exactly what was his cruel will; and soldiers led Pancratius away out of the palace, through the streets of Rome, out by a great gate, and on to the road called the Aurelian Way, where they killed him with a sword. The boy's body lay in the road all that day and all night until the next morning, when a kind Christian lady wrapped it in fine linen, and crying much, bore it to a catacomb near by, and left it there after she had covered it with fresh flowers. Word of the bravery of Pancratius soon went round to all the other boys in Rome who were Christians; and many of them said aloud that if Jesus wanted them to die for Him they would try and be as brave as their friend.

XII

ST. FAITH

LATER on Pancratius was known in England as St. Pancras; and all boys will do well to think a great deal about him. What they must not think is that boys only were amongst the child martyrs in the early centuries of the Christian Church. Christian girls have always shown that they also are prepared to be out-and-out brave for the sake of Christ. Whilst the same Diocletian was on the throne of Rome there was living at Agen in Aquitaine, which we now know as a part of France, a young Christian girl called Faith. One of the persecuting servants of Diocletian was called Dacian. He was governor of Spain from where he swept across into Aquitaine. When he got to Agen he said that all Christians who would not

worship false gods should be put to death; and in order to frighten everybody he had spread out before the eyes of the populace instruments of torture he had already used in Spain. The Christians of Agen had as their bishop Caprasius; and when Dacian threatened, horror and fear came upon them. They ran away from the town to the neighbouring hill of St. Vincent and hid in a cave near the top in the hope that the rocks round about would protect them. But when her fellow Christians took to flight, young Faith felt it would be cowardly to accompany them. So she stopped in Agen, and Dacian heard about her. He sent for her to appear before him; and on her way to his tribunal she prayed, "Jesus Christ, my Lord, Thou never forsakest those who call upon Thee. Help Thy servant and send my lips words worthy of the questions I have to answer before the tyrant."

Jesus heard her prayer, and when she was face to face with Dacian she remained bold as a lioness. After she had told the persecutor her name, he asked roughly, "What is your religion?" "I," said Faith, "have been a Christian since I was quite little. I serve the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart and soul." "Sacrifice to our gods," came the harsh answer, "or you shall die under the torture." The governor spoke fiercely, but Faith did not tremble. She looked up to heaven and said in a clear strong voice, "In the name of Jesus Christ my Lord not only will I not sacrifice to your gods, but I am ready to suffer all kinds of torments."

She was put to death; and after there came to pass something that was really very wonderful. Bishop Caprasius had run away to the cave in the hilltop with his flock. There news had come to him about Faith and he thought much about her and prayed

a great deal. As he prayed he had a vision of her crowned with a crown of precious stones, and he saw a dove descend and rest on her head. He knew the vision meant that Faith was especially honoured by God, and as he realised why she had been honoured it seemed to the bishop that it was wrong for him to be a coward and hide. Ashamed that he had not been as brave before, he therefore returned to the city. On the way there his mother met him, and when he told her he was going to suffer for his Lord she encouraged him to go forward and to die bravely; and inspired by the example of Faith, Caprasius was faithful unto death. Nowadays, children who are true to Christ are not put to death for their faithfulness. They may be laughed at and now and then other children may be spiteful to them, but that is about the worst that happens to them. Yet always if boys and girls are faithful to Jesus they not only help other children

to be brave for Him. They also help grown up people to be faithful even as the courage of Faith helped Caprasius.

XIII

THE CHOICE

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy. He was quite a nice little boy, shining face, freckles, not too tidy hair, inky fingers, sailor suit, long trousers and all. It was his half-term holiday; and so he persuaded his mother to put some lunch into a handkerchief for him, and he set out all alone into the country. He started at nine o'clock and at a quarter past ten he ate his lunch, which is the kind of thing some boys do. Then he wandered on until he reached the hill country; and after one rather stiff little climb he followed the road round where it

turned and sat down by the hedge to rest. As he was resting he heard someone coming up the hill. Because that someone was just round the corner he could not see, but he was cute enough to notice that the sound of the walking was the sound of sandals and not boots. The next moment a tall man with grey hair and a long white beard, and clad in a dark gown, stood before him. "Good morning, young Roderick," said the newcomer, "I greet you." "Greeting," replied the boy, politely. "But how did you know my name?" "Oh," explained the wise man, "I am Learning, and therefore I know everything. I know the names of all the boys in the world, and their nicknames as well. And I know the names of little girls and the sweet names their mothers call them. And I know how to make fireworks and how to translate a Latin exercise, and how to do the most difficult sums. Tell me, young sir, will you not come with me?

You will learn much by living with me." Roderick looked at the old gentleman; and he remembered that he was not so fond of lessons as he might be. Still, he did not hate them; and he was rather inclined to walk with the newcomer for at least a while, but just at that moment he could not make up his mind. So he said, rather shyly, "It's quite nice of you to ask me, but I can't make up my mind for a minute or two." "I have learnt patience," said the old gentleman, kindly. And he sat down on a heap of stones near the opposite hedge to wait for Roderick's decision.

XIV

THE SECOND NEWCOMER

WHILE he was waiting someone else came round the bend on the hilltop. This second newcomer was rather startling to look at, for he wore football knickers and a jersey, and his football boots were just splendid. "Good morning, young sir," he said to Roderick; "what's your name?" The boy told him. "Thank you,'' he replied. "My name is Sport." "I thought it was something of the sort," said Roderick.

"Anyhow, the old gentleman over there knew my name." Sport turned round at once and saluted. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said to the old gentleman. "Sport should always bow to Learning, and I did not see you were here. Excuse me a moment

whilst I talk to the boy." "Now, boy," he said, "wouldn't you like to play your very best?" Roderick nodded. "Wouldn't you like to play absolutely fairly?" "I would," said Roderick, "but it isn't always easy." "Then," said Sport, "come with me and learn how to play a straight bat and how to head a football and how to shoot straight with a marble and how to find the very hardest chestnuts in the autumn and use them—you know how." Roderick's eyes shone as he heard the invitation, and yet somehow something inside him kept him back from deciding. "This," he announced gravely, "seems to be my day for invitations. Please, I'd like to think about it. Learning didn't mind my thinking; you won't mind either." "Think on, young sir," said Sport, quite genially. "The best players are those who play with their heads, so please do a really good think. I'll wait." And Sport sat down on the ground quite close to Learning

and began to talk. Whilst the boy was thinking he heard Sport call out, "Hallo! who's this coming round the bend? This makes three of us. Who is it?"

XV

THE COMING OF HAPPINESS

The third newcomer was an out-and-out beautiful young woman clad in a trailing garment of white, the hair of her bare head bound together simply by a white ribbon. She smiled so happily as she came along that Roderick, who had long ago decided he was not fond of girls, forgot about this and found himself liking her immensely. The fact was that her smile reminded him of his mother when she was extra pleased with her boy, and there was a look in her eyes that made him think of his little baby

sister at home. "Good morning, masters all," said the third newcomer gaily. Because Learning and Sport rose to their feet for a moment and bowed, Roderick bowed as well, though he was not at all great at bowing. The young woman smiled at his awkwardness, and then she said, "I have seen you before, Roderick dear. My name is Happiness." Roderick did not quite like being called dear by a strange young woman, for he thought himself too old for that kind of liberty. But the lady seemed to mean it so much that he decided to take no notice. "Roderick," said the third newcomer, "my name is Happiness. Come with me, young sir, and we will have together an out-and-out good time. We will have jokes and lots of fun, and we will steal in and put loaves in poor people's kitchens, and we will watch them through their windows and laugh to see their surprise. And we will do kind things to crippled children, and grow

glad to see their white faces light up for a moment. Come with me, Roderick, and we will be just as happy as it is good for us to be."

XVI

THE FOURTH NEWCOMER

Roderick had been puzzled before, but now he was more perturbed than ever. Here were three people, Learning and Sport and Happiness, all inviting him to come with them, and he really liked them all a great deal and found it very difficult to decide between them. He was thinking very hard, when round the bend in the road there came Someone whom he recognised. That Someone wore a crown of thorns, and in His face there was a shining of a great love, and His bare feet showed

two marks which the boy noticed were repeated in His outstretched hands. He looked round with amazement to see that Learning and Sport and Happiness were all kneeling in the road; and when he would have knelt himself the last Newcomer reached out a hand to him and said, "Put your hand in Mine and come with Me." And gladly and willingly, Roderick did as he was asked. Then he and the fourth Newcomer set out together; and Roderick felt within him the glow of a great satisfaction as they walked. Hearing a noise behind him, he looked round for a moment, and to his amazement he saw that Learning and Sport and Happiness were following him and his Companion. He looked so puzzled, that Learning smiled gravely and took pity on his surprise. "You see, young sir," he said, "when children decide for Jesus Christ we other three come also as a matter of course. The children who decide

to walk with Jesus learn well and play well and are out-and-out happy. Don't you understand?" And the boy was happier than ever, because he understood.

XVII

THE RESCUE

The river Adige in Italy was some years ago spanned by a bridge, in the middle of which was a house wherein lived the toll-gatherer who collected pennies from those who used the bridge to cross the stream. One autumn the river began to swell, and soon the tide rose and rose until much of the neighbourhood was flooded. People were very alarmed, but they could do nothing to stop it. At last the waters rose so high and they were so swift and so fierce that the bridge was broken by their flow, and all

that was left of it was that middle part on which was built the house of the collector of tolls. The most unfortunate thing was that the toll gatherer, together with his wife and his little children were in the house; and the stream was rising higher and higher every hour, so that unless they could be got away they were certain to be drowned. This made everybody very sorry; and crowds came to see what they could do. Yet the water was so swift and so dangerous that no one had the courage to take a boat and to try and row through the turbulent stream to the poor folk in the tax collector's house. Noblemen and poor men, tradesmen and lawyers, all looked at one another, and everybody was afraid. At last a very great nobleman, who was afraid to go himself, held up a purse of gold, and said "I will give this to anybody who will deliver that unhappy family." The people hurrahed, and were very pleased: but for all that

nobody had courage enough to try and save them. Suddenly along came a poor peasant from somewhere else; and as soon as he saw the flood and realised what was the matter he got into a boat, and though the waters whirled it round and round and made it difficult to steer, by the strength of his arms he got into the middle of the river. Then he waited until he could get somewhere near the toll gatherer's house. The toll gatherer, who was waiting with a very white face, threw a rope to him. The children stopped crying, the peasant fastened the rope to his boat, and then the toll gatherer and his wife and the children got into the boat, and amid the cheers of the crowd the strong-armed peasant rowed them safe to land. While people were patting the peasant on the back and saying how brave he was, the nobleman came forward and offered him the purse of gold he had promised as a reward. The peasant took off his hat and

bowed low. "I thank you, my lord," he said; "but I shall never expose my life for money. My labour is sufficient livelihood for myself, my wife and children. Give the purse to this poor family who have lost their all."

He gave the purse to the toll gatherer, who was so trembling with cold that he hardly knew how to thank him. Then once again he bowed low to the nobleman, and went on his way. When he was gone everybody said again what a brave fellow he was. One man said he was generous also; and another man whispered to his friend that it is better to be a brave peasant than a cowardly nobleman.

They spoke well: yet it would have been better to have imitated the courage they were content to praise. Jesus Christ was the bravest man who ever lived, and really good people are always brave. Are you brave? Of course, you cannot go rescuing people

like the peasant, but there are other ways of showing courage. One of the best of ways is this—Be as good as you can, whatever people may say, whatever they may do, and however other children may laugh.

XVIII

PRAYER TIME

JIMMY, who is aged seven, had had quite a great day. He had been to school twice, he had fed his chickens, he had torn a stocking on a nail in the hen-place, he had had too much tea, and his grandmother had given him sixpence. Then about half-past seven came tubbing-time; and the bath went through without any more trouble than usual between him and his nurse. Then when he was beautifully arrayed in mother-

made pink pyjamas, he was ready for prayers. Secretly, he was very proud of those pyjamas; and the first time he wore them he lay awake for quite an hour, long after everybody thought he was asleep, and there in the dark he just wallowed in the fact that no one else in the world was wearing such splendid garments. He fell asleep at last, murmuring to himself, "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed in one of these," which, of course, is not exactly Scripture, but was near enough for Jimmy. Since then he has asked for pockets in the trousers of his next new lot; and I have heard something about a ticket pocket in the jacket for fear in his dreams he should take a railway journey. All this shows that Jimmy was a great boy for thinking; and, of course, by now he had got used to his pink pyjamas, for he has worn either them or the other pair for just six weeks. Prayer-time always means for him saying his prayers with mother's

help; and when he went into her room mother gave him a smile that did not merely mean she was pleased with his pyjamas.

Down he went on his knees with a more definite plump than was really necessary; and when mother had smiled again at seeing his soles so clean she let her hand stray into his hair. The moment she touched him he jumped up, and she was very surprised. "Why, Jimmy dear," she asked, "aren't you going to say your prayers?" Jimmy heard the question all right, but for a moment he did not answer. He stood up straight, and he looked very serious. "Come, Jimmy," said his mother again, "aren't you going to say your prayers?" "Yes, mother," said Jimmy at last; "but I think I ought to think a little first." Of course his mother nodded; and she and Jimmy did some thinking together. Then they prayed together; and when prayers were over Jimmy

wondered why his mother kissed him more than usual. And the strange thing is now that every night before Jimmy's prayer-time he and mother together have a little think-time first. And when one evening mother was away, and it was nurse's privilege to help Jimmy with his prayers, the lad was surprised to find she did not know anything about thinking first. "Why, nurse," he said, "how can I really feel and know what I am going to pray about unless I think a little before I kneel down?"

XIX

THE CHINESE GIRL

Some few years ago a Chinese girl walked into the women's hospital provided by the London Missionary Society in Peking, the capital of China. Very often girls who enter

the building come for the sake of some older woman whom they bring with them to receive medical treatment. But this particular girl came because she herself wanted the help of a doctor. Her arm was miserably bandaged with a piece of not at all clean paper, fastened somehow over a wound underneath. As soon as a nurse was able to attend to her she carefully took off the paper, and while this was going on she asked the patient how old she was. It turned out that the Chinese girl was nineteen, and very soon the nurse had forgotten this information in her horror and amazement at the terrible wound in the girl's arm. There was a just awful place which looked as though somebody had cut a big piece of her flesh right away. "Who did that?" asked the nurse. The answer did not come very quickly. But at last, while the nurse was still busy sponging the arm with warm water and doing all sorts of things, the patient

confessed that she herself had cut a big piece out of her own arm.

This information led to more questions, and by degrees ever such a strange story was told. In China they are great believers in filial piety, and filial piety means honouring and obeying and doing all you can for parents and grandparents whilst they are alive, and being respectful to the memory of all ancestors who are dead. Because of filial piety and also because she loved her, the Chinese girl patient was very much attached to her mother, and one day her mother was very ill. The girl was alarmed, and did all she knew to help. But before long her mother was ever so much worse, and it looked as though she would die. In the extremity of her sadness the girl thought a great deal and inquired from everybody about ways of helping people who are ill. Now in China many people believe in particularly weird ways of trying to cure sick

folk, and the girl got the idea that if she cut a big piece out of her arm it would assist her mother's recovery. So one day she got a knife, and thinking how much she loved her mother and how much she wanted her to be made quite well, she just cut a piece of her own arm right out.

Do you think this is a nice story or rather nasty? Of course, no boy or girl who reads this must cut anything out of anybody; and I think the story is both nasty and nice. It really was splendid for even a mistaken girl to love her mother so much as to do what has been told. How much do you do for your mother? When she is ill are you particularly careful in your house to be quiet? And when mother looks rather white and is headachy, do you try and think of new ways to make her cross, or do you do your little best not to be tiresome, and do you tell her you hope she will be better soon? Further, when mother is

quite well, and asks you to shut the door when leaving the room, or to wipe your boots on the mat when you come in, do you remember or are you too careless? Unless you are doing all you can to help your mother, that unenlightened Chinese girl is in some ways far better than you. So when mother has to be helped or obeyed, and you are not keen on what ought to be done, just murmur to yourself, "Filial piety," and you will be surprised what a difference this will make. Then what a pity it is that a good daughter like that Chinese maid should have such curious notions about what cures people! And how splendid it is that she had the women's hospital in Peking to go to! The more missionary doctors we send to China and the more missionary nurses we can pay for, the better chance will Chinese girls have of learning better. How is the Missionary Box at your house getting on?

XX

THE CITY GATE

THERE is a certain small girl who one night after she was in bed had a beautiful talk with her mother. It was all about Jesus and the Eternal City, and the prayers of children, and how to keep good; and after her mother left her she lay awake thinking for quite a while, and was not a bit afraid of the dark. Then she said part of her prayers over again; and soon she was asleep. While she slept she dreamed; and this was the fashion of her dream. She saw a wondrous walled city, exceeding beautiful to look upon; and beneath one of the many towers of the wall there was a mighty closed gate. Even while she looked there came first ten, then twenty, then 100, then 1,000, then thousands of evil-looking men with

cannons and smaller guns, with swords and much else. They fired their cannons at the wall, they massed themselves in companies and charged against the gate, they shouted loud threatenings and they did all they could to enter the city. But never a dent did they make in the wall, and the gate was in no way marked, and within the city nobody seemed to know they were assaulting it, for not so much as an arrow came back against the invading host. At last the enemies of the city withdrew, and outside there was peace.

Scarcely had they gone when up the white shining road that led to the city gate there came a small girl, very much like the little maiden who was dreaming the dream. She had not got a very big fist, but she doubled it and so knocked at the great door what for her was quite a mighty knock. To the amazement of the dreamer at once it opened : and someone in shining raiment took the

maiden by the hand and said, "Welcome, little one. What is it you want?" "I," said the small girl, "wish to ask something from the King." The gatekeeper in shining raiment smiled and nodded; and, leaving the gate wide open, he led the little girl to a large square, in the middle of which a great white throne had been set up, and on the throne sat the King. The small girl knelt before Him, and said what it was she wanted. Her request was at once granted, and, after speaking her thanks, she rose and passed through the gate and down the shining road. With that the dream stopped; and when the dreamer woke up next morning she was not at all surprised to find herself wondering what it had meant.

She was so puzzled, that whilst she was being dressed she told her mother all she could remember, and she asked what could be the meaning of such a dream. Also she was specially good, and put her arms through

everything quite quickly, and did not even wriggle while her hair was being done. So of course her mother had to think her hardest to try and explain the dream. At last she understood, and this was her explanation. "It is like this, dear," she said. "The city that you saw was the city of God, and it is so strong that all the evil in the world just cannot do it harm; and through all the ages nothing wicked has ever been able to enter it, for God dwells therein, and He is its strength. But whilst all the wickedness of all the world cannot force one of its gates open, yet when the smallest child turns in prayer to the King, at once the gate opens, and that child can go right to Him and ask and be answered. That, I think, is what your dream means." "How splendid!" said the little girl eagerly. "I think, mother, I should like to say my prayers at once." And she knelt down and said her morning prayers

to Him who always hears the prayers of the children.

XXI

THE ODD SPARROW

THIS is not a story for boys who are conceited or for girls who think too much of themselves. Any such will have to wait till another time for the story that fits them. But there are children who sometimes wonder whether God notices anyone so small as themselves, and some have even been heard to say they are so little that it does not matter how they behave. This is a story for all boys and girls who imagine that God thinks them too small to count.

Vigo is a city and seaport of Spain, in Galicia, in the province of Pontevedra, on a spacious bay. It is surrounded by walls

with bastions, and it has steep, narrow and tortuous streets. In one of these streets there once lived a Spanish boy who became a Christian. He was not the kind who say they are Christians and then behave otherwise. On the contrary, so wonderful was the way he kept his temper, and so beautiful in other respects was the life he lived, that a gentleman who had watched him for a long time one day asked what had influenced him. The reply of the boy was strange. He said, "It was all because of the odd sparrow."

"Odd sparrow!" repeated the gentleman. "Odd sparrow! What do you mean?" "Well, sir," said the boy, "someone read to me one day out of the Gospel of St. Matthew the words of Jesus, 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?' It was the odd sparrow that did it." Still the gentleman was puzzled, and he asked for a further explanation.

"It's like this, sir," said the young Christian. "We boys trap birds and we sell two for one chico, which is one of our coins. For two chicos we throw in an odd sparrow. That makes five; but the odd sparrow is of no account. It is a make-weight, and we don't count it. Now Jesus knows all about our ways. Perhaps someone told him about our trapping birds and how we sell them."

The gentleman by now was understanding a little, but he was not quite clear. So he persuaded the boy to go on explaining; and this is what he was told at last. "You see, sir, I am so poor and so small that no one ever thinks of counting me, and I always thought I did not matter to God. I am like the odd sparrow, and yet our Lord said, 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows.' And I thought that if He notices the odd sparrow He notices me; and if He notices me, my life matters, and though I am little

and lots of folk think I am of no account, I know now that I must do my best to follow Him or else He will be disappointed." The gentleman quite understood, and long after the boy had left him he thought hard and said to himself how much he wished all children could learn from this story what it teaches. What do you think it teaches?

XXII

THE MAGICIAN'S POTION

The magician lived in a dark cell full of bottles; and, of course, he had a long, white beard and a lengthy gown. One day a small girl, all red of face and untidy of hair, burst into his dwelling-place. "Please," she said, "when I was coming along the road a boy called me a toad; and when I said he was another he called me something

worse. Boys are horrid things, and I want to be made very, very angry so that I can go back and say unkind words to him and perhaps hit him. I know you can give people things to drink that make them very angry, and I want a very big glass quite full." "Young lady," asked the magician gravely, "have you got any money? It always costs a great deal when people are made angry." "Here," answered the small girl, "is my money-box; it is quite full of pennies." She burst it open and took out a great many coins, which she gave to the magician. "Thank you," he said, "I will now mix for you the potion that makes people angry"; and he reached up to the shelves on which were the bottles. The first bottle had in it a yellow liquid, and a label outside read 'General Naughtiness.' He poured some of its contents into a glass. The second bottle was labelled 'Nastiness—Pure.' "A little of this," he

explained, "is enough." He only poured three drops of it into the glass. Then he turned to a bottle marked outside 'Mixture of Greediness, Conceit, Spitefulness and Wasp Stings—Extra Strong.' He added a great deal of this to what was in the glass. The small girl watched him, and began to feel rather frightened. What was in the glass did not look at all nice, and she was afraid it would taste nasty. So she looked round the shelves, and at last she said to the magician, "Please, there on the little shelf at the side are two bottles without a label. One has something white inside, and the other has something that is a beautiful red. Please pour in some of both." "They have labels," came the words of the magician, "but they are turned round the wrong way. Still, if you want some of each I will pour out." He added some of the white liquid and some of the red to the contents of the glass. The small girl said to herself, "Now to be

angry, to be out-and-out cross, now to be a real mad bull—cow, I mean! Here goes!" And she gulped down the liquid as fast as she could. After she had emptied the glass she pulled herself together and got ready to feel cross; but when she caught sight of herself in a mirror just behind the magician, she saw that her face was smiling. She tried to stop the smile; but it went on and on. The more she tried to feel angry the more happy she became; and at last she even found herself loving the boy she had wanted to hate. She clapped her hands and asked the magician whatever had happened.

The magician was dropping her pennies into a big oak box, where they made a very fine row. When he had finished counting he said, "You would have what is in those two last bottles added to what you were going to drink, and that is why." "That is why!" echoed the small girl; "I do not

understand." "Turn round the last two bottles," ordered the magician sternly, "and read what is on their labels." The small girl turned round the bottles, and the label of the one with the red liquid was inscribed 'Think.' The label on the other read 'Pray.' "There you are," added the magician. "You would have a little 'Think' and a little 'Pray' added to all the other things, and that is why you feel happy and are smiling and are beginning to love everybody, instead of being out-and-out cross." "Well, I never!" exclaimed the small girl, still smiling. "Didn't you?" asked the magician, severely. "Well, now, listen. It is really very silly and very wrong of small girls to let themselves get angry and spiteful. Nothing grieves Jesus Christ more; and if both girls and boys, when they feel like getting angry, would think a little and pray a little their behaviour would be very different. In fact, it would be much better. Jesus

Christ would be far more happy when He looks at them, and very soon they would be much happier themselves. Just you consider that, and you will see that it is as plain as it can be." "Well, I never," repeated the small girl, mystified. "Mind you never do it again," said the magician, in stern tones. "And here is one of your pennies back to help you to behave better. Now go, and go quickly. Good-bye." And the small girl ran away as fast as sturdy legs encased in black stockings would carry her.

XXIII

THE MOSS

Once there was a great explorer called Mungo Park. Why he was so called, and what his mother called him for short, I do not know. What I do know is that he

explored in Africa, and in so doing he went through great forests, where no white man and no white children had ever been. Perhaps this was just as well, for the forests were full of lions and tigers, and when lions or tigers bite men or children it is not easy to forget them for quite a long time. One day Mungo Park got utterly and entirely lost. There was no kind policeman to show him the way. There were no shops where he could buy food. He was altogether lost. He had no food to eat, and he was ill, and no one seemed near to help him. So the poor man just lay down on the ground and felt out-and-out miserable.

"Did he cry?" I do not know. He never said. Perhaps not, for he was the kind of man who never cried unless he was really obliged. Are you like that? Or do you really rather enjoy a good cry? A little girl I know—but, there, never mind! Let us go on about poor Mungo Park. He lay

on the ground. He felt so weak and ill and lonely that he imagined even God had ceased to care for him. This, of course, was foolish, for God is Love. But when you are ill you cannot always help how you feel, can you ? Mr. Park became so miserable that he thought he must just die. Then suddenly his eye caught sight of a little piece of moss, and he looked at it hard. It was small and curly and green and altogether beautiful ; and it made him think. "Why," he said to himself, "God cares for that moss and has made it beautiful, and He has looked after it even though if I had not got lost perhaps no eye but His would ever have seen it. Then if He cares for moss I am quite sure He cares for me. So here goes for another try to get out of being lost !" And thinking thus he rose to his feet and made a new effort ; and before very long he had found his way, and he got something to eat and all was well.

Do they have Harvest Thanksgiving services at your church? If so, I quite expect you enjoy seeing all the decorations; and when mother sees you among them she is sure to think her little girl is as pretty as any of the rosebuds, and the two boys in the pew behind are sure to think the big turnip is just like each other's head. Also you would like the services ever so much more if there were a bunch of ripe grapes in every pew. Ask your minister whether this cannot be managed next year. Also try and remember how beautiful are some of the flowers used in harvest service decorations. God must care for flowers, just as He cared for Mungo Park's moss. Do you ever get sad, like Mungo Park, and wonder whether after all God really cares for you? I expect you do sometimes. Next time you feel like that say all alone to yourself that if God cares so much for moss and flowers He just must care for even quite little boys

and girls. Also try and hunt up in your New Testament something Jesus once said about flowers and about sparrows. And when you have thought a little about this say to yourself, "How good I ought to try to be, for I am the child God loves!"

XIV

THE STORY THAT IS NEARLY TRUE

THIS is the story that is nearly true. Read on and you will understand. One day last week a lady was sitting in a public park, and she had bought for herself some beautiful strawberries, which she was eating as she sat in the shade. To her there came near a little girl, fairly clean, ragged and open eyed. Her eyes were wide open because she was looking at the strawberries: and as she looked the longing within her made

her mouth water, for she wanted some strawberries very much. Fortunately for her the lady to whom they belonged looked up and saw her. Seeing, she understood what the wide-open eyes and the wistful face meant, and quietly she said aloud, "Little girl, would you like some strawberries?" The little girl stood for half a moment, first on one leg and next on another, then she answered excitedly, "Wouldn't I just, lady!" So the lady smilingly handed over to her all the strawberries that were left.

The little girl took them, and went off to where her two little brothers were sitting in the sun. Speedily she divided the strawberries; and the lady was glad to see that she gave to each of her brothers rather more than his share before she took any for herself. Together the children ate the fruit; and they were glad together, for strawberries are really very nice. When they had finished

they got up and wiped pink mouths with red hands, and walked up to the lady and formed up in a straight line like a Boys' Brigade at drill. Then the little girl said, "Please, lady, we've come to say 'Thank you'!" The two boys smiled, and said shyly, "Thank you very much!" And the lady smiled in return and waved her hand, and the children ran away.

This is the story that is nearly true. That is to say, all you have read is quite true up to where the small girl and her two brothers ate the strawberries. The rest I had to make up, for it is not true that the three of them came and said "Thank you!" to the lady. What do you think of that? Of course it was very nice of the little girl to divide the strawberries with her little brothers and to give them their shares first; yet, as she was so good, it would have been very easy for her to have been rather better. She and the other two ought to have thanked

the lady. Are you careful to say "Thank you!" whenever you ought? When you have presents, and when anyone hands you anything, do you just grunt or say nothing? Or do you look up and say nicely, "Thank you?" The finest boys and the best girls are those who try hard never to forget to say "Thank you!" Especially ought we to say "Thank you!" to God. He gave us father and mother. He sends us strawberries and flowers; and all the best things in our life are just His love made up into a different pattern. So mind when you say your prayers to-night to say to Him, "Dear Lord, thank you very much for being so good to me, and please help me to be more worthy of your goodness."

XXV

THE CHIEF

ONCE upon a time, away in Mashonaland (find it on the map !), there was a missionary, and to him there came a Chief who asked him to give him a present. He saved trouble by saying exactly what he wanted, and the gift he craved was a pair of the missionary's old trousers. This was not very much to ask, and the missionary found a pair which made the Chief supremely happy. Of course, he said "Thank you ?" and then he went away and the missionary saw him no more until the next Sunday.

The missionary did not see him at the very beginning of the service in church ; but, of course, he was not surprised, for even in England some people think it makes them more important if they come late to worship

and disturb everybody as they march to their pew. So the service began, with the missionary at ease, although the Chief was absent. Before long the good dignitary appeared, looking, of course, every inch the great man he really was, and as he walked up the aisle most people looked his way. This seems to have been what he hoped for, and he had dressed himself especially. Besides his usual Sunday go-to-meeting clothes, he had actually got on not a whole trousers, but half a one, and in addition to his Sabbath finery he was wearing what looked like a long legging and a bit extra.

When the service was over the Chief and the missionary had a conference; and the minister asked the dignitary why he was only wearing one leg and what he had done with the other half of the trousers. To him the Chief made immediate and cheerful reply. He had given the other half of the trousers to his brother; and of course the

missionary had to accept that as a more than sufficient explanation. Whether the Chief still wears his trouser leg on Sunday, or whether by now it has been cut down for his little boy, I do not know. But I take off my hat to him; and I take off my hat to the missionary. Why to the missionary? Because I am sure it was the Christianity he had learnt from the missionary that taught the African to divide things with his brother. Do you not think so? And do you not think this story gives us an extra reason for doing our best for our missionary boxes? Also, there is another question. Is there anything in which the African Chief beats you? Of course, all boys who read this are not expected to divide their trousers with their brother. But do all my little readers share their chocolates and oranges and sweets and things with their sisters and brothers and friends? Answer this question in between your smiles at the Chief.

XXVI

SOUL OF MAN

Soul of Man, ailing and aged, lived all by himself in a wretched hovel. Once in the days he still fondly remembered the hovel had been a beautiful cottage with a garden wherein grew all manner of fruits and aflame each spring with the glory of many-coloured flowers. Also time had been when those who loved Soul of Man dwelt with him in the cottage and little children called him father and waved hands to him when they left home for school in the morning. But all this was many years ago. Now the one who loved him most of all had gone elsewhere. The children, grown-up and no longer young, were scattered over the world. The cottage was battered and decayed, and in the garden were weeds and old tins

and long grass, but never a flower and no fruit. Soul of Man, however, was not allowed to live alone. Often visitors came to talk with him, and there was one who was very near him, again and again, when he did not see her. Indeed, she was never far away. Her name was Love of God; and sometimes there came also to the hovel Pardon, who was very like her, and Comfort and Strength for the Day, who looked like members of the same family. All these talked to Soul of Man about a Palace that was being built for him by the King; and once, when Strength for the Day had not come near him for twenty-four hours, Love of God told him the Palace was finished. He heard, but hardly believed them. Once he said to himself, "If it is true about the Palace being finished, and right about its belonging to me, the King would send Love of God or Comfort or some other messenger to tell me to move. I suppose it must be

true. But why do they not come one day and fetch me ?"

Some few weeks later, though Pardon came often to see Soul of Man and Love of God was always in the house, Strength for the Day had not entered his room for quite a time. It was evening, and the sun reddened in the west, and then the room grew gloomy. Through the gloaming Soul of Man looked up to see a stranger. "Who are you ?" he asked. "I am the messenger of the King," was the grave reply. "You are to come with me to the Palace that has been made ready. We must go at once. There is no time to prepare after I have come." Because he realised he could not say him nay even had he wished, and because also he was not sorry to be gone, Soul of Man made joyful haste, and he and the messenger walked up the white road that leads across the frontier of time. Once over the border, Soul of Man met the King, and received welcome

and offered many thanks for much. Then the messenger took him onward to the Palace, that had been prepared; and there was waiting for him the one who had loved him best of all. And gladly she answered to her old name "Mother." Then they entered in: and the Palace was to them a place of exceeding gladness and mighty peace and great rest. And though it was dusk when he had left the hovel, it seemed high noon at the Palace, and he wondered much why within the Palace there seemed no candles nor lamps. "Never mind!" he thought: "Love of God, who explains everything, will tell me when she comes."

Soon she came, and before long she had explained. Then Soul of Man asked further questions. "Tell me," he said, "why did you not summon me earlier to the Palace? Why did you not tell me before to leave the hovel? Why did not Pardon or Comfort

or Strength for the Day order me to depart ?" "Why !" exclaimed Love of God, "the summoning of such as you to the Palace that is prepared is the work only of the messenger. When the King instructs, he fetches ; and no one else is allowed to do his work. The name of the messenger is Death." All at once Soul of Man understood. "Why !" he broke in, "I always thought Death was an enemy ; and yet when he came to fetch me he looked enough like you, Love of God, to be your brother. How Strange ! Why did I not know all about him before ?" "Tell me," asked Love of God, with much kindness and simplicity, "what did they tell you about Easter when you were a boy ? And how much trouble, Soul of Man, did you take to understand and remember ?"

XXVII

NORNA

Once there was a little girl called Norna, sometimes very good, sometimes rather cross, looking quite pretty in a sun-bonnet and aged seven years and some odd days. Norna had a grandmother who sometimes thought that she might behave better, but who all the time was very fond of her, as is the way of grandmothers. Norna got tremendously excited one day when she knew that her grandmother was going to take her a long railway journey to Scotland; and at the appointed time, with much anticipation and a half-ticket, she found herself seated in a railway carriage with grandmother right opposite. Before the train started an old blind lady came to the carriage-door on the arm of an attendant and was safely

guided inside. Very carefully she felt her way until she was able to sit down on the cushion. Norna looked at her rather hard, fascinated by her sightless eyes, for she thought it could not be rude to stare at blind people; and as Norna looked, into her own little heart there came great pity for the blind lady and a great thankfulness to God because she herself could see.

Norna lived in Liverpool, and at some times of the year Liverpool is a very nice place to get away from. So once the train was clear of the city Norna's spirits rose, and she grew so glad that she quite forgot the blind lady. Mile after hurried mile the train sped, and before long the engine was painfully climbing the hill country in the Lake district. In the half-mist the hills lay around like drowsy lions, and Norna's grandmother was so delighted that she called out aloud, "Norna, dear, do look at these magnificent hills." "Hush, grannie," said Norna at once,

"hush." And she spoke as though she meant it. Grannies are not used to be ordered to hush by their granddaughters, but there was something about the way Norna spoke that made her grandmother keep quite quiet. A minute or two afterwards Norna explained herself. She came and whispered in her grandmother's ear, "You see, grannie dear, that poor blind lady in the other corner cannot see; and I was afraid that if she heard us talking about the beautiful hills it would hurt her more than ever to think that she is blind."

Norna's grandmother understood; and she had no thought of anything but praising her, for it is always splendid when small children are considerate of other folk. Jesus Christ especially likes them to be considerate of those who are old, or lame, or ill, or infirm, or blind.

What about you? One day I saw an old blind man hobbling along the pavement,

when out of school came a lot of noisy boys rushing like a menagerie let loose. They did not mean to be unkind, but they ran right into the old blind man and almost knocked him over. This was inconsiderate, and you must never act in that way. Indeed, if ever you see a blind person who is halting because he does not know exactly where to tread next, be sure to go to him and ask him whether you can tell him anything or lead him anywhere or do anything for him, Try hard to be considerate, not only to blind people, but also to all others who have a call upon the pity of Christ and the sympathy of little children.

XXVIII

THE SPELLING-CLASS

It was the spelling-class at what was known as a preparatory school for young gentlemen, and the young gentlemen—commonly called by themselves "us chaps"—stood in a semi-circle facing a teacher and a black-board. There was Henry, whose fingers were always inky; there was Freddie, who was good-tempered when he wasn't cross; there was Archie, who could bowl "sneaks" that got the middle stump of quite big boys; there was Jim, who wore a sailor suit; Arthur, whose hair looked like a mop; Claude, a fat boy, whose uncle kept a sweet-shop; and several others.

Their teacher was quite a nice young lady with whom half the boys were secretly in love, though, of course, they would never

have admitted it to one another, and this was the way she managed her spelling-class. If a boy could spell the word she asked him he stayed where he was, and she wrote its letters on the board, but if he answered wrongly the next one was asked, and if he failed, the next and so on, until the correct answer was given by some one, who, unless he was already ahead of him, took the place of the highest boy who had failed to answer properly.

On the morning of our story Archie was top boy and Jim was second. Further, Jim was very anxious to get first place because that afternoon the minister was coming to tea; and he always asked him where he was in his classes. If Jim was low down he felt that despite the nicer tea than usual he always had when the minister called, he wished he had not come; but if he could say he was top, all was well, even to the extent of the minister giving him a penny and saying he

need not put it in the missionary-box. Most people, then, who read this will understand why Jim was determined to get to the top of the spelling-class.

The words went on and on and Jim had no difficulty in keeping second; but Archie spelt splendidly, and Jim seemed to have no chance of beating him. Once the top boy hesitated, but at last he made a shot which turned out all right; and Jim felt rather sorry, for he knew the word well. Five minutes later it was Archie's turn again. "Spell 'deceive,'" said the teacher, chalk in hand. Archie never could remember the rule, "I before E, except after C," and so he spelt the word d-e-c-i-e-v-e. "No," said the mistress, "Wrong. Next boy." Jim was not sure, but he knew Archie's way was not right. So he began. "D-e-c-e—" he spelt; and the teacher interrupted him. "Right," she said, "Go to the top, Jim." And as the boys changed places to the great joy

of Jim, she wrote on the board the full word "d-e-c-e-i-v-e." As soon as Jim saw what she had written, his face fell, and his hand went up. "Please, teacher," he said, "I oughtn't to be top. You stopped me too soon. I was going to spell it 'd-e-c-e-v-e.'"

And he changed places with Archie, and was second once more.

The lesson was finished soon after with Archie still top; and at tea Jim had to confess to the minister that he was only second. "Did you really try?" asked his mother, as she poured out the minister's second cup. "Yes, mother," he replied, "And I might have been top only I didn't like." "Didn't like what?" asked his father. "Didn't like to cheat," explained Jim. And Arthur, who had been asked in to tea as well, gulped down his fourth piece of cake and told what you know. Neither he nor Jim could understand why the grown-up people seemed so pleased. Jim's father looked at his mother,

and both looked at the minister. Then the minister felt in his pocket and took out sixpence. "Here, Jim," he said. "This is for you for refusing to beat another boy unfairly. And here's threepence for Arthur for telling his story so well. And I hope you'll both remember as you go through life never to take any advantage that is not fairly yours. Jesus wants all His children always to be quite fair and out-and-out honest in everything. So try and remember. Will you, boys?" Jim said he would. Arthur nodded, for his mouth was full of cake. He had just taken his fifth piece, and somehow felt he deserved it.

XXIX

THE BOY WHO WAS NO GOOD

QUITE a long time ago a gentleman was walking along a country road in the north of Ireland, and near him, to his surprise, he heard a murmur of many voices. When he turned a corner his surprise passed, for there in front of him was a country schoolhouse, through whose open windows came the sound of many children repeating tables and doing other things aloud and together. Because the gentleman loved children, and because also he liked seeing them at lessons, he entered the schoolhouse. The teachers received him with courtesy; and when he asked them to continue as though he were not there, they went on with the lessons. For a little time with great interest the gentleman listened to questions and answers.

Then he noticed that one boy stood all by himself against the walls in a corner. "Who is that boy?" he asked of a teacher, "and why does he stand apart from the rest?" "Oh," replied the teacher, "he is a stupid boy. He either cannot or will not do our work. He is no good at all." The gentleman did not like hearing all this; and further, instead of being cross with the boy, he was sorry for him. So he went right up to the lad and asked him quiet questions. The boy was nervous and hesitant at first; but at last he answered freely.

The more he spoke to him the more sure did the gentleman become that the boy was not so stupid as the teacher had suggested. So at last he put a hand on his shoulder, and said: "My boy, it cannot be true that you are no good at lessons. Just you try again, and try hard, and keep on trying as long as you possibly can." The gentleman went away, but the boy did not forget. It

was something so strange for him to be spoken to so kindly, and it was something so wonderful for anyone to believe in him that he just made up his mind that he really would try harder, and that somehow he would tackle his lessons in real earnest. This meant a very big effort for him, for he was not the kind of boy to whom sums and spelling, and so forth, are as easy as play. But somehow he made himself stick to things; and though once or twice he was not at all all he ought to have been, still by degrees he managed to get on better and better. When he grew up he was known as Dr. Adam Clarke, and he was a great scholar and wrote many learned books, among them a wonderful commentary on Holy Scripture.

Is there anywhere among our little readers, either a boy or a girl, concerning whom grown-up people say that he or she is no good at all at lessons? Do not believe them. Whatever others may think, there is Someone

who believes that such a child could do much better if he tries. That someone is far more of a gentleman than the visitor who went into the North of Ireland school, and He understands us all far better than the visitor understood the boy in the corner. His name is Jesus Christ. He believes in all the boys and all the girls in the world. So let us have more trying hard at lessons, especially at those little scholars like least. Perhaps out of your class there may come a Dr. Adam Clarke, or, maybe, a woman scholar, who knows more than he ever had the chance of knowing. Do you think that is likely to be you ? Why not ?

XXX

THE ORIGINAL HYMN

Some of you children will have heard of John Keble, the great English hymn-writer; and some of you may even know that at Oxford there is a college erected to his memory. He was a man of God and a clergyman; and all who knew him rejoiced in his great love for Jesus, and found it in their hearts to be glad by reason of his piety. He wrote hymns more easily than some of you can write exercises, and he wrote them more than six times as well. The careless way some boys and girls—but there, we'll keep to our story. One day he and two other clergymen were in his study busily engaged in looking through lots and lots of hymns for a new hymn-book; and Mr. Keble offered for their judgment a hymn

he told them he had just written. While they were considering it their host was called out of the room on some parish business, and it was several minutes before he was back. When he returned, both his friends looked very grave, and one of them said, "Did you not tell us, Keble, that your hymn is original?" "Certainly," replied Mr. Keble, very mystified; "I wrote it all myself." "You do not mean," asked the other friend, "that you translated it?" "Oh, no," answered Mr. Keble; "it is all my own writing." "Then," asked one of his visitors, "what do you make of that?" And he pushed across the table a copy of a hymn exactly like Mr. Keble's except that it was in Latin. Mr. Keble's brow corrugated as he read it, and, looking quite ashamed, he said, "Dear me! Why this must be the original. I must have read it and forgotten. I really did believe the hymn was my own, and not a translation, and I am glad you

have saved me from claiming the work of another. How remarkable!" And Mr. Keble looked and felt very sorry and rather ashamed.

Soon after, however, he looked very different, for his friends, their faces all shining with laughter, told him exactly what had happened. He had written the hymn, as he had said, at first. Then when he was out of the room one of his friends had quickly turned it into Latin, and he and the other had agreed to play a joke on the poet. And quite a good joke, too, was it not? At least, it shows us that the best Christians know that Jesus likes them to have some fun now and then; and we must all be willing to take turns in being the butt of the jokes of our friends. Of course, you can laugh all right at others. But how about when the joke is against you? Mr. Keble never even thought of getting cross. He just laughed with his friends. Then, what of the clever

friend who so quickly and perfectly turned his hymn into Latin? Surely he must have worked hard at school, and have stuck to things and really learnt instead of being lazy or copying, or pretending he couldn't learn at all? So since he worked hard as a boy he found that after he was a man even his dry old lessons helped him to fun. Now, some of you never thought that well-done lessons help to fun later, did you? But it often is so. Even I can think of several jokes I should never have enjoyed had I slept all the time at chemistry class at my school. So once more into the breach! And tackle your Latin and mathematics and French and history as if you meant it.

XXXI

THE SOWER

ONCE upon a time in the land where things really happen, a sower went forth to sow. He allowed himself not to like what he was doing, and as he flung forth his handfuls of corn sometimes he grumbled, and sometimes he muttered things to himself; and now and then he stopped in a passing fit of sulks and ceased to sow. When the wind was cold he whimpered. When clouds made the sky black he nearly cried; and altogether he made as much fuss about his work as he could, for he was lazy and peevish, and not easy to love. At last the sowing was finished somehow, and the very minute it was over he ran off to sit by the fire and play dominoes, and grumble all over again at having had so much work to do. He lazed through several

months and never went near his fields. But when autumn came and he saw others going forth to reap he bethought him that his own harvest must be ready. He took a sickle and went out to reap. When he first saw his fields he was not at all sure he had come to the right place. For while there was ripe corn here and there, yet seemingly everywhere there were huge weeds of various colours. Weeds that were simply green and rank, weeds with red flowers, with blue flowers, with yellow flowers—his fields were just covered. "I never sowed all these," he muttered; and in his alarm he ran to a wise old hermit who lived on a hill near by and asked him to come and see and explain.

The hermit stroked a long white beard and took up his staff and hobbled after the sower to his fields. Then he looked wiser than anybody ever looked before or since. He did quite a lot of thinking; and at length

he spoke. "Give heed," he said. The sower gave heed. "Tis thus," the hermit explained. "While you sowed you made a fuss about working. You made several fusses and were often quite cross." The sower looked guilty and nodded. "Also," went on the hermit, "you grumbled and had sulks. Nasty things, sulks. Then before cold winds and clouds you were rather a coward. It has turned out that sulks and grumbles and cry-babying and all manner of fuss were seeds, and you sowed them. This is the harvest. Those red weeds are temper come to flower. Those blue blossoms are just sorrow for yourself all a-growing and a-blowing. The other weeds are full-grown grumbles and sulk and all manner of fuss. They are ugly and harmful, and they take up room where the corn should grow. I have spoken."

The sower was glad he had finished. For what he said was not nice hearing. Yet the

sower was not entirely a bad man, and he made answer thus: "I am sorry," he said with bent head, "and I have a girl and a boy at home. Tell me something to tell them that they may understand what you have taught me and may behave better." "What sort of a boy?" asked the hermit eagerly. "Ordinary boy," said the sower, "wonderful eater, but never washes his hands before dinner unless he is told every day." "Know the sort," replied the hermit with a smile. "Bless them, bless all of them. What's the girl like?" "Ordinary girl," said the sower. "Loves her mother, but leaves her things all over the house and make her mother work to get them together." "Smack her!" broke out the hermit. "I mean, bless her!" he explained with a little cough. "Now," he went on, "your children do lessons. Tell them from me that lesson time is seed time. If while they are sowing the seed of knowledge they grizzle and

grumble, and are afraid of work, and sulk at having to try hard, and are sorry for themselves, and sometimes cry, and are often lazy, why all these things are seeds as well, and when they grow up and are reaping the harvest, they'll be like your field, weeds, I mean, temper and ignorance and all that." "I'll tell," promised the sower. "But how is it like that?" "Nobody quite knows," explained the hermit. "But it is the way God has made His world."

XXXII

THE COMPASS

Some years ago a big ship ran against a rock and went to the bottom of the sea. Everybody who heard about it was surprised, for the ship had no right at all to be where she had struck the rock, and all kinds of

inquiries were made. It turned out that the captain had been quite sober, that the steersman had steered properly, and that the ship had answered to her helm. So all interested were puzzled as to the reason of the disaster. Later on divers were sent down to the wreck, and they went into the deep waters and crawled all through the sunken vessel, and brought up books and papers and merchandise; and at last they brought up the ship's compass.

Someone who understood compasses examined the instrument with great care; and he found fixed in its works a tiny piece of steel. At once he understood that this piece of steel had made the middle of the compass go all wrong; and this explained why the vessel had been wrongly steered on to a rock. But what he did not understand was how the little bit of steel got into the instrument. To discover this he had to inquire and inquire. Finally he came

across the sailor man who on the day of the disaster had cleaned the inside of the compass; and on asking questions he discovered that the sailor had used his pocket-knife to help in his work. While the blade was in the instrument the point had been snapped off, and he had failed to notice. But the broken knife-point had made the compass so unreliable that in the end the vessel was wrecked.

Any child could tell that this story shows the importance of little things and the necessity for noticing them. But do all my little readers clearly understand what else the tale teaches? It shows that just a little thing wrong inside, a little thing that ought not to be there, can bring harm not only on ships and compasses, but on children. This does not refer only to things inside that cause indigestion and pains under the pinafore. Though, of course, good children should remember about these, and should

not gobble their food too quickly. Also the story gives another reason for not putting your knife into your mouth. You might bite off the point and swallow it, and upset your—upset yourself. Remember this at meal times, especially when you are out to dinner. And going back to that little bit of steel in the compass, it was like children having a little selfishness or temper inside them. Children who keep that selfishness and temper never can steer straight, for even when they mean well greed or crossness put them all out of gear, and make them go all wrong. And this is a pity. Think what a nice child you would be if you were never selfish and never cross! Say something to-night in your prayers about this; and next time anger or selfishness rise up within you say, "Now, old knife point!" and say it as sternly as you can.

XXXIII

THE BOY MARTYRS

CHILDREN who know something about the reign of that Queen Mary who followed Edward VI. will remember that she was a Roman Catholic, and that she and her friends persecuted Protestants with all possible severity. It is worth while recalling also that some of those who died for their faith were mere lads. There was a boy, William Brown, of Brentwood, who for the crime of not being a Roman Catholic was condemned to be burnt. When the hour of fiery trial came the day was dark and oppressed even more by the gloom than by the prospect of death, the lad looked round for sympathy. "Pray for me," he said to those who were watching. "I will pray no more for thee," said an angry Romanist who stood by, "than I will pray for a dog."

"Then," said William, as he lifted his face towards heaven, "Son of God, shine upon me." As he prayed the sun pierced a dark cloud, and shone so full into his eyes that he could not bear its glare, and had to turn his face away: whereat, said an old chronicler, people mused, because it was so dark a little time before.

Another Protestant boy who gloried in the truths he believed, was brought before Bonner, the Roman Catholic Bishop of London. Bishop Bonner asked him all sorts of angry questions: and when he found the lad was true to his faith he began to threaten. "Boy," he asked, "do you think you can bear the fire?" Near the lad was a candle which had been lit because the room was dim: and for answer he held his hand, without flinching, in its flame. The heart of Bonner sank, for he knew that if even Protestant children were so brave for their faith he could not hope to exterminate Protestantism.

Were not this lad and William Brown great boys? All Protestant children ought to be proud as they remember that two such young people were once of their number. Do you know why you are a Protestant? What could you tell me about Martin Luther and Anne Ascue and Latimer and Ridley and Cranmer? If you do not know about these, ask father or mother to explain. If they have forgotten the answers to your questions, ask your minister to give the children of his congregation some talks about these great folk, and tell him the story of the two boy martyrs to show him you know something about the history of Protestantism. While you are learning why you are a Protestant, all the time you will, of course, know that you must try and be a Christian, and always you ought to do your very best to lead a good life. Sometimes other children laugh at you for refusing to tell a lie, or saying you will not copy, or something of

that sort. When this kind of thing happens, never play the coward. Think of that boy who put his hand in the candle flame, and be equally brave for the sake of Jesus.

XXXIV

A SCOTCH LASSIE

THIS is a true story, for it came to me from Mrs. Sellar, a delightful old lady, who has written down in a book much that happened to her during a long life. Once there was a little Scotch lassie, who was very little and very Scotch. She lived with her mother and loved her much, though she scarcely ever said anything about it. Sometimes she and her mother went out together, and then a strange thing happened. Instead of walking hand in hand with her mother, she walked just behind; and those who saw her noticed that just where her mother's foot-

prints trod, there she put her own little foot. If they walked through the snow, or across the sands, or even in the mud, you might have looked everywhere and never have seen any separate footprints for the little girl. Always where her mother trod she trod; and though she had to stretch she managed it somehow. Always in the footprints of her mother she put her own little feet.

This surprised people; and again and again they asked her why she walked thus. For some time she would not tell anyone; and even when they coaxed her she was silent. But one day some one who knew just how to manage little girls, spoke to her gently, and asked her why she always put her feet in the footprints of her mother. Then the little face lit up with a shy smile, and the little eyes glowed with light, and the small girl replied in the voice in which we tell secrets, "Because I love her weel!" Had you been English and heard, you might

not have understood her Scotch way of speaking. English children cannot always understand Scotch, any more than Scotch children can always understand English. So that all may understand this little girl's saying, I translate it and tell you that the English of what she said would be, "Because I love her well!"

Was not this a fine answer? And is it not splendid to think how much the little woman must have cared for her mother? I expect you love your mother just as well. Why not show it by treading in her footprints? Of course, I do not mean that next time you go out with mother you are necessarily to walk behind. Indeed, if there are several of you and you try this, people would think it rather strange. What I mean is, that if you really do love your mother, you should try to tread as she treads. For example, what about tidiness? Mother has to spend a great deal of time every day tidying up

after you, especially if you are one of those children who will leave anything anywhere. If you really love mother you will be as tidy as she is, and so will save her trouble. Then there is someone else in whose footsteps you ought to tread because you love. His name is Jesus Christ; and once, because He would do all He could to show how much He loves you, cruel men knocked nails into His feet. But He is not lame, and He can walk before boys and girls. By kindness and good temper, and truth and fairness, put your feet in His footprints; and if anyone asks you why you do it, answer them by saying, "Because I love Him weel!"

XXXV

TWO BEGGARS

Once upon a time there were two beggars. They lived in an Italian city and they begged on the steps of a church. One was nice,

and the other was nasty; and both were very poor. Kind people often gave them money: and so they were able to live. One day a great nobleman was passing by the church, followed by a servant. He stopped and looked at the two beggars. Then he said something to his servant. The man put his hand into a basket he was carrying and took out two loaves. These, at the nobleman's command, he gave to the beggars. Each received his loaf with great joy; and they thanked the nobleman very much, and wished him all kinds of happy things. Indeed, when he was a long way down the street he could hear them calling out how much they hoped God would bless him and make all his little boys and girls quite good.

When the nobleman was out of sight the nasty beggar began balancing his loaf on his hand. He noticed that it seemed quite heavy. So he asked the other beggar if he would kindly allow him to hold for a

minute the loaf that had been given to him. The nice beggar was quite willing; and the nasty beggar took one loaf in each hand, and became quite certain that his was very much the heavier. Now, no one likes loaves if they are heavy, for their bread is not good. The nasty beggar therefore pretended to get confused as to which was really his loaf, and he handed back to the nice beggar the heavy one. This, of course, was unfairness and cheating; but the nice beggar knew nothing about it. At night time each of them went home. The nasty beggar soaked his loaf in weak water and wine, and as he ate it he smiled to himself to think how well he had cheated his friend. The nice beggar cut into his loaf with a knife, and was amazed to come across something quite hard. He therefore broke the loaf into two with his hands, and, to his surprise and delight, all the inside of the loaf was full of

gold coins. It was this that had made the loaf so heavy : and the nasty beggar in trying to exchange unfairly to his own advantage had lost a great deal of money.

Do you not think it served the nasty beggar right ? I am sure that you do ; and I am also certain that had you known the nasty beggar, and had you met him the next day, you would have laughed at him. Well, people who cheat as he cheated deserve almost anything. Never be like him. Understand that whenever you cheat someone else, or whenever you are unfair to them, you always lose far more than you gain. Of course it is not always money you lose. But always you lose the approval of God, and the sense of a good conscience. Also something goes out of your character. So never cheat. Never be unfair. Do not try to get the better of other people.

XXXVI

THE CYCLIST

Most children, either at a circus or elsewhere, have seen a company of trick cyclists; and they have been very delighted with the various ways in which they can ride, and with all the amazingly skilful things the performers can do on their wheels. The one thing that sometimes spoils their performance for sympathetic hearts is the fact that so many of their feats are dangerous; and when one of the cyclists is quite small it is not easy to watch without more anxiety than pleasure. On one occasion there came to a certain hall in London a company of trick cyclists that had as its junior member ever such a wee girl. Even when spectators knew that she had been chosen because she was small for her age, many of them said

it was a shame she should have such work to do. Others said that perhaps the money she made by appearing helped to support her father and mother, and in any case no one interfered, and the child did her dangerous part in the performance perfectly each night.

Connected with the hall there was a gentleman who often used to smile at her, and who felt rather sorry that the little mite had such work to do. His regret lessened when he saw how magnificently she did her performance, but for all that he could not quite stifle his fears. One night, however, he saw something that made him feel ever so much more at ease about her. To get to the platform, the little maid had to go down a passage, and because her turn did not come until her fellow cyclists had done something, she often hung about in this passage for several minutes. One evening, the gentleman connected with the

hall was watching her seniors from this passage when the small girl came along. The gentleman stood in the shadow, and she did not see him. He was just going to speak when he noticed that, after a hasty look round, the little girl knelt down and folded her hands and began to pray. The soul of the gentleman leaped up with pleasure, for he knew that the small girl was asking God to take care of her, and within himself he felt quite certain that no harm could come to a little maid who thus lifted up her heart towards her Heavenly Father. When the little girl had finished her prayer it was time for her to go on to the platform, and soon she had passed into the circle of light, and the gentleman was smiling at the applause that greeted her bow, and was out-and-out pleased with the later delight of the audience in her performance.

Do not my little readers feel that, as they think of the little girl praying there before

going on to the platform, they love her more than ever? And do they not think that to-night they might put into their own prayers a petition for all children who have to risk life and limb to entertain? Further, will it not be well for all boys and girls who have to do anything difficult to imitate the little cyclist and to pray before they begin? Two things happened in answer to the cyclist's prayer. First, she was more sure than ever that God looked after her. Second, because she knew God was looking after her she had confidence to do her work more perfectly. It is not often that children have to do anything that is dangerous, but all of them sometimes have to do something that is difficult. Even a hard sum can be done more perfectly if, when its difficulty is realised, little hearts are raised towards God, and He is asked to help with the figures.

XXXVII

THE ADMIRAL'S COAT

All children know a great deal about Horatio Nelson and "England expects every man to do his duty," and his victory over the French at the battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805. Also most boys and girls know that while our fleet won the day, yet from the French ship *Redoubtable* there came a musket ball that hit Lord Nelson as he was turning in his walk on the quarterdeck of the *Victory*, and, entering his left shoulder, passed into his spine. So severe was the damage it did that at once the Admiral had to be carried below, and there three and a-half hours later he died. As he lay dying, no one need have been surprised had he thought of no one save himself. But that was not his way, as this

story shows. While the Admiral's life was slowly ebbing away, sailors brought below and placed near him on the floor a young midshipman, who had been wounded in the body and head. And there the brave boy lay, with no one to look after him, for so many sailors had been wounded that few could spare time to notice a mere midshipman. But the dying Nelson noticed him, and saw his poor white face and his bleeding head. And so sorry did he feel for the lad that he ordered, "Let someone take my coat and roll it up and place it under that boy's head." Of course, all who were near and could help hastened to obey his command, and soon the midshipman had the Admiral's coat for a pillow.

Nelson died, but the boy lived to become a gallant sailor and serve his country. But when they were able to attend to the lad, the blood had so run from the wound in his head that it had stuck together his hair and

part of one of the epaulettes of the great Admiral. What is called the bullion of the epaulette was so glued that they had to cut it away and leave some of it plastered to the boy's hair. To-day that coat is in a museum attached to Greenwich Hospital, and if you go and look at it you will notice that part of the bullion has been cut away. But whether you go or not, you will surely be ready to admire Nelson for thinking of someone else so kindly, even though he himself was drawing near to death. Nelson showed himself a man at the battle of the Nile and the battle of Copenhagen; but I think Jesus Christ appreciated him most when in the hour of his death agony he spared thought for a midshipman. How are you for thinking about others? Some boys are out-and-out noisy, and when mother puts her head out of the dining-room and says, "Do be quiet, dear; I'm trying to write a letter," they answer, "Sorry; I

didn't think." Girls are now and then careless and say something that hurts, and when they discover they have done wrong they plead, "I didn't think." Such excuses really mean that they are more selfish than they realise. Boys and girls who follow Jesus must try every day to think less of self and more about others. If the dying Admiral Nelson could—— But you know the rest.

XXXVIII

HOSPITAL SUNDAY

He was only five, but he really ought to have known better. What he did was this. At the church he attends, and where he sings hymns and behaves himself as well as he has a mind to, it was Hospital Sunday, which means that all the money collected that day was to go to help support hospitals. As

usual he had been given a penny for the collection; and always, until then, it had been given him in the form of one big round coin, which he nursed in a damp hand until it was sticky and then dropped it into the collection-plate with as much rattle as possible. But on this particular Sunday he had been given two halfpennies. The change pleased him, and, thinking it over he decided to go shares. When the plate came round he put one halfpenny in, and kept the other one for himself. His mother, who saw this, was scandalised. But the plate was gone in a moment, and unless you are the minister it is not polite to say much to small boys in church. So his mother merely whispered a moment, and had to watch her son trying hard to look as if he did not feel a little guilty.

When church was over, his mother said nothing at first. She knew she had better let him go on thinking. During Sunday

afternoon she explained that it was selfish to keep halfpennies that ought to be used to help little children who are sick. "Well, mummy," he said, "I am not always well myself. You remember when I had whooping cough?" His mother remembered, but she wished to talk about something else. They had a long talk until the boy said he was sorry, and then they both decided something. He had sixpence saved up, and it was agreed that with that, and some more pennies mother would get from father, he was to go out early in the week and buy a big bunch of grapes and take it himself as a gift to some hospital. He hardly liked parting with his sixpence, but he liked less the idea of his greediness hurting some poor sick child. So the grapes were bought at a greengrocer's; and soon after he was standing on the steps of a big red-brick hospital for children. His own nurse had pulled the bell, and before it was answered

a smiling hospital nurse, all brightness and white collar and cuffs, saw him waiting, and received the grapes and thanked him and kissed him. This last made him feel a little miserable, for he was not sure whether the hospital nurse would have been so kind had she known everything. But his own nurse did not tell about him, and he hurried home to let his mother know what he had done. His mother smiled on him, and after another talk she finished by saying, "Yes, dear. First of all it is best not to be greedy and not to do wrong; and the second best thing is this, when you have done wrong try and make amends. That is what Jesus Christ would like all boys and girls to learn." The small boy nodded. He had learned.

XXXIX

THE DUKE'S GIFT

WHO knows about Martin Luther? He lived four hundred years ago; and at one time he was a Roman Catholic and a monk. But he learnt differently by reading his Bible; and he became one of the very first Protestants. The first Protestants had lots of enemies; and some of Luther's enemies caused him to be put on trial for daring to think and speak as God had taught him. Luther's teaching and his bravery made him many friends; and though some of his enemies would have liked to kill him, they dared not do so, because they were afraid of what those who loved Luther might do to them in return. One of his friends was an old Duke, who when Luther went to his trial, wondered what he could do to show

that he really cared for him. Now, as children know, little things often show love just as much as big things; and because the old Duke knew that Luther was very fond of a certain drink, he sent him a mug of it quite full to where he was being tried. Luther was delighted with his kindness; and when he had drunk it he sent back his thanks and the empty mug. And he added, "I pray God if ever the Duke needs a friend the memory of this his gift may come back to him and help him." They told the old Duke of Luther's prayer, and he was more pleased than ever that he had sent him the mug quite full.

Years passed by, and the time came when God wanted the old Duke nearer to Himself; so the good nobleman knew that very soon he would have to die. Now to die, for old people, is just to live on without being bothered by a body that hurts; but sometimes they do not quite understand

this, and they are afraid. The poor old Duke was rather afraid ; and as he lay, weak and thinking much, on a great bed in a large room, he called to a page to read him something out of the great Bible he kept near his bed. The boy turned over the leaves, looking here and there, and, without thinking where he was stopping, he put his finger on a verse, and began to read. This is what the dying Duke heard: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." The verse is the very last one in the tenth chapter of Matthew. Turn it up and read it for yourself. The Duke heard it, and at first he wondered why God had guided the boy to such a passage ; but suddenly he remembered how he had been kind to Martin Luther, and how the good man had prayed for him. So he thought that now, when he was about

to die, God had sent him the verse to comfort him; and since he knew Jesus who had spoken the words would be his Friend while he was dying, he died much cheered. And if before he passed to the better life he explained to his page, be sure the boy understood that whenever we do a good turn to someone else, later on God sends us the memory of it to help us when we need a friend; and perhaps also the page helped everybody all he could for quite a long time.

XL

THE POSTMAN

Some years ago there lived at Yenshan, in China, a postman whose name was Fan Hao-Tsêh. He was a Christian, and he was always cheerful. This last means a great

deal, as you will understand when you are told that he had to walk ninety miles to fetch his letters. Sometimes he was tired, but he never grumbled; and so kind was he that everybody who knew enough to understand Christians liked him immensely. In the summer of 1900 a large number of fierce Chinamen, called Boxers, started a rebellion and began to kill every Christian on whom they could lay hands. So that they might not catch him Fan Hao-Tsêh went to the village where he had been born, and was hidden by his relatives. But a spy told about him, and a cousin was arrested by mistake for him. A real Christian could not tolerate this, so the postman came out of his hiding-place and went to the cruel Boxers and said, "It is I who am a believer in Jesus. Do with me what you will."

Saying unkind things and rejoicing at the opportunity of doing Fan Hao-Tsêh harm, they seized him and bound him. Outside

the village they dug a big pit, and then lowered him into it in an upright position. To see him standing up in the pit pleased the Boxers very much, and derisively they asked him whether Jesus could save him now. Some of them said that if he would deny his Lord they would lift him out of the hole and take off his ropes and let him go. When he refused, they took their shovels again and filled in the soil until it reached his knees. They hoped this would terrify him and make him say he would no longer be a Christian. But to their amazement and rage, the postman explained that ever since he had known Jesus great joy had come into his life. "How," he asked, "could I give Him up? How could I deny such a Master?" These words so angered his captors that some of them slashed at him with their spears till the blood came. Others filled up the pit with soil as far as his breast. This made it difficult for him to breathe,

but he managed still to speak out bravely for his Lord. Fierce enemies piled the soil right up to his lips, and yet he would say nothing against his Master. "I can never give up Jesus," he exclaimed defiantly. At that his enemies flung soil up over his head. Then gloating at what was happening, they stamped the earth down on him until they were sure he was dead.

If you have a postman friend who has time enough to listen, be sure to tell him this story, and whether you have such a friend or not, think over for yourself all this story means. If that Yen-shan postman could be brave for Christ, I hope that you will never mind other children laughing at you for trying to be good. It was missionaries who told Fan Hao-Tsêh about Jesus; and that is still another reason why you must not fail to pray for missionaries, and you must not allow the missionary-box to be neglected.

XLI

THE CHRISTIAN

THOMAS SAMSON was a miner who worked very hard in a Cornish mine for his daily bread; also, he was a Christian. There are some people who call themselves Christians, and the way they live makes some other folk think unkindly both of them and the Christ they pretend to follow. But Thomas Samson was really a good man, who lived out every day of the week the truths he preached from the pulpits of little chapels each Sunday. The promotion of another workman in the mine left vacant a job far less arduous than that at which Thomas Samson usually worked. Walking to and fro from their homes, and chatting down the mine, the workers asked each other again and again who would be likely to

secure the coveted post. No one except Thomas Samson was really surprised when one day the captain, or foreman, of the mine sent for him. "Thomas," said the foreman, "you know I've a vacancy because of the man I promoted the other day." "I did hear something about it, master," replied Thomas Samson, wondering much why the matter was mentioned to him. "Well," went on the captain, "I think you ought to have the vacant post. It means easier work than you have to do now; and besides not being such hard work it will bring you in more money." He explained at length just exactly what his offer was, and finished by asking Thomas Samson whether he would accept and start to-morrow on his new work at higher wages.

The miner was quiet for a moment, and then he answered, "Thank you very much, sir, for thinking of me, but I would rather that you gave it to our poor brother Tregony."

"Well, but," replied the mine captain, "I don't see why Tregony should have the job. He could do the work, of course, but it's you I want, and I've offered it to you." "Well, sir," explained Samson, "it's like this. Tregony is not so strong as I am, and he cannot work so hard. I have noticed lately that towards the end of the day he seems to be very spent. He has a wife and children, and we all like him, for he is a useful man is Tregony. I shouldn't like to think his hard work shortened his useful life when he could have an easier time if I stick to my present job. So, thanking you kindly, sir, I hope you won't mind."

This did not at all suit the captain of the mine, and he argued and said what he thought and pleaded. Samson argued respectfully but firmly in reply, and so at last the mine captain gave in and Tregony was given the easier job. Thomas Samson went on with his hard work. Later, the mine captain

told the other men just exactly what had happened; and sometimes when Thomas Samson was tired, or had a particularly stiff piece of work, they would tease him about his generosity. But behind his back practically all his workmates said to each other, "That's the way to act, and what Thomas Samson did shows that he's a real Christian."

XLII

UNDER HIS SHADOW

Some years ago now there lived near Jedburgh a minister of Christ who was known as Mr. Young; and one winter day he went out to visit his congregation in their homes. As he walked from house to house it snowed; but his friends received him kindly, and at some houses there were children who smiled at him. So he did not mind the weather,

for everybody knows that the smile of a really good child makes a warmth on the coldest day. Yet, happy as he was, Mr. Young spared many a thought and many a prayer for old folk and poor folk, and lonely people whose lot is all the harder when snow falls and the days are dull. Thinking that all such are children of God, he knocked at the door of a cottage tenanted by an old man, who had scarcely any money at all. The food some of you children push away from you, and say you cannot eat, would have been a feast for him; and never in all his life had he eaten a dinner like many of you have on Sundays. He was as poor as poor can be, and his little cottage had scarcely any furniture in it. Mr. Young entered the house to find himself in a cold, comfortless room. There was scarcely any fire on the hearth, for poor people can spare very little money for coal. The roof had holes in it. At the bottom of the door there was an

opening through which the wind whistled, and under the door and through the roof the snow came drifting in and made the room seem colder than ever. Poor old man! Do you not feel sorry for him? Yet he was not sorry for himself. He sat in a chair with his Bible open on his knees, and he was reading God's Word to himself. "What are you about to-day, John?" asked Mr. Young. The old man thought of God, whose message he was reading, and in ever such a happy voice and with a great lighting up of his face he answered, "Ah! sir, I am sitting under His shadow with great delight."

Was not that splendid? There are three great morals to this true story, and children should not skip one of them. Do you boys and girls who are better off ever spare time to think what it means for so many people to be poor? When mother has kissed you "Good-night," and you snuggle down warm and cosy in bed, do you ever pray a little

prayer for the people who will shiver all night long either because they have no bed at all or not enough bed-clothes? The other night I saw over a dozen poor men lying together for warmth on the cold stones against a wall, and this was in the very heart of the richest city in the world. Think what this means, and make up your mind that when you grow up you will fight hard until there is no sad poverty in England. This is moral number one. Number two is just a simple question. When really poor people are so poor, how can you grumble as you sometimes do? Then, last of all, how true it is that when the poorest of the poor think enough of God and remember how He loves them, they seem unable to think of anything else. Does it not show what a Comforter and Helper our Heavenly Father is? Sometimes you have troubles, great big sadnesses inside that make you out-and-out miserable. At such times stop

thinking of yourself and think of the great God who loves all boys and girls, and you will be comforted. And if even with the comfort there is still some sadness or pain left, make up your mind you just will be happy. How splendid it would be if one day, when God is listening especially, He heard your voice and that of other little people say, "I am sitting under His shadow with great delight."

XLIII

THE STICKER

Many years ago there was a small boy who was going to and fro about a house and who was rather troubled because he had nothing to do. Most boys with nothing to do soon occupy themselves by getting into mischief, and they have plenty to do when the time

for punishment comes. But this was not that sort of boy; for after wandering about for quite a time he went into the kitchen and asked his mother and cook if there was not something he could do to help them. They smiled and looked quickly at one another. Then his mother said that if he was really anxious to help he could "top and tail" some freshly gathered gooseberries which were on the table. Do you know what it means to "top and tail" gooseberries? It means taking off the little things that grow at either end of a gooseberry, so that those who eat the fruit after it has been cooked may be saved pains inside. The little boy quite understood what they wished him to do; and when they had drawn a chair near the table for him he set to work valiantly.

For some time he worked splendidly. It was clear that as he pulled first one end of each berry and then the other he was really enjoying himself. But before long his little

hands did not move so quickly, and soon he stopped a moment and breathed deep. His mother knew he was feeling the temptation to stop, so she encouraged him by saying that when children begin a task they ought to carry it right through. The small boy found life rather a trouble for the next few minutes, and more than once he nearly gave up topping and tailing. But suddenly he remembered what hard things Jesus Christ had done, and how He never gave up as long as it was right to go on, and the next minute, to their delight, the grown-up people in the kitchen heard him softly murmur to himself two lines of a hymn which ran:

> "That which my gracious Master bore,
> Shall not His humble servant bear?"

And humming this over and over again he stuck to his work until the very last gooseberry was topped and tailed.

Surely they gave him some of the gooseberries as a reward? Had I been there he

would have had my share as well, unless the berries were not ripe. He really deserved anything anyone had to give him, for the little man was a sticker; and it is no wonder he grew up into a great minister of Jesus Christ, known as Dr. James Martineau. Do you stick to things as he stuck to topping and tailing? When my little readers go back to school after holidays, lessons always seem harder than ever. So it is a great temptation to give up trying to learn a vocabularly or to do a sum just because it seems so tiresome. But, children, it is worth while persevering; for it is the stickers who grow up into the best men and women. So, if you find yourself giving up, remember, like James Martineau, how Jesus Christ never gave up as long as it was right for Him to go on, and try and imitate your Lord.

XLIV

THE FLOWER OF HAPPINESS

The little girl had been crying about quite a number of things, and still miserable she was sitting near the country road all by herself. As she sat she thought hard and wished everything was better. Before long there came by two aged men arm in arm and talking earnestly. Said the one with the kinder face to his friend, "The Flower of Happiness! It is the people who find that who are glad." The little girl pricked up her ears at his sentence, and because she wanted to be glad she said to herself, "The Flower of Happiness! Yes, that's what I want. I'll find it. I'll start out at once."

While the two aged men went their way along the road, the little gir looked round for the right place in which to start out.

Just across the field she espied a wood. Somehow it looked promising, so she climbed a gate and crossed the meadow, and soon she was walking under the trees and eagerly scanning the ground. But to her disgust there was never a flower in all the wood. Near the roots of the trees and elsewhere on the earth there were hideous-looking toadstools. This was so disappointing that the little girl began to be miserable again. While she was still walking about she met a keeper with a gun over his shoulder. "Please, sir," she said, "what's the name of this wood?" "This, little lady," said the keeper, politely, "is the Woodland of Selfishness." "Then," demanded the inquirer, "it is no use me looking here for the Flower of Happiness, is it?" The keeper was not quick at understanding, so all he said was, "There are no flowers in this wood at all." With that he went his way, and the small girl made what haste she could in to the high road.

A short walk there brought her to what looked like the beginning of a beautiful garden. Indeed, on a board by the entrance was printed "The Garden of Pleasure." At once she entered and passed gladly under green archways and down a shaded path. Everywhere she looked for the Flower of Happiness, but she soon knew it was not there. There were flowers in plenty, but not a single one she had not known before. Suddenly the path narrowed, and it ended so abruptly that because she was not thinking where she was going the little girl fell into what was quite a deep chasm filled with refuse from ashpits and all kinds of things that were not nice. Troubled by this catastrophe, the little girl climbed out and ran her fastest along the path and as quickly as she could got away from the Garden of Pleasure.

Along the ordinary highway she walked again. Coming to the cross-roads she took

a turn to the right, and there she saw a most interesting sight. By the roadside on a heap of stones sat a big girl and a little girl. The little girl had a book and the bigger one was helping her with her lessons. Not far from them a boy scout was rushing towards a two-year-old baby boy, who had fallen with his nose in the dust, and was making quite a noise about it. "Now then, Jellicoe," said the boy scout, cheerfully, "don't you eat too much road dust. Here, come to me, you little beggar, and sit up and grin." The little beggar did a short solemn think about this proposal, then he decided he would grin. When he grinned the boy scout grinned also, and everything seemed all right. The little girl turned from watching them, and saw in the very middle of the road a wounded soldier limping along with the aid of a stick. He had been hurt in battle, and this was his first day out of hospital, and he was trying to walk alone.

He had thought he was stronger than he was, and he halted and stood very forlorn with a disappointed look on his face. At once the little girl went up to him, and since she could just reach she placed her arm in his and said, "Come along, Mr. Soldier, I'll help you to walk." "You will, will you, missy," said the soldier with a smile. "Upon my word, I think you will."

Whether it was the little girl's arm or his own spirit, the wounded soldier began to move. "Why," he said, stopping suddenly, "What's that flower in the hedgerow? Seems to me I've seen it before, but I'd forgotten all about it. There's two blossoms, my dear —gather one for each of us." The little girl rushed to the roadside and plucked the flowers as he asked. The moment she touched the blossoms she knew she was handling the Flower of Happiness. "Why," she said excitedly, "this is what I was looking for. What's the name of this road, soldier man?"

"The name of the road, missy," echoed the soldier, as she forced a flower into one of his buttonholes, "why this is called the Road of Helpfulness. That is how that girl over there came to be helping her sister with her lessons, and that's why the boy scout comforted Master Jellicoe, and that's why—." But the little girl stopped listening because she was thinking so much she could not be busy with anything except her own thoughts. When she began to listen again the soldier was saying to himself, "Why, of course, that was the Flower of Happiness. Come to think of it, that flower always grow by the side of the Road of Helpfulness."

XLV

THE RED INDIAN

THIS is a true story of the time when what we now call the United States of America was very sparsely settled, and when there roamed about large bands of Red Indians who sometimes were friendly with white men and sometimes used to kill all the whites they could, and keep their scalps. This last kind of behaviour made many whites suspicious of a redskin, even when there was no war. Once, in peace time, a very tired-looking Indian came to the inn at a place called Litchfield. "Please, missis," he said to the landlady, "me Injun. Got no money. Me want plenty food—fill up inside. Me want place rest and snore. You give to poor Injun? This good Injun, very good." Sad to say, the landlady got quite

cross, and all she said in reply was "Git!" This meant that the Indian was not at all welcome, and as he had no money he was to get away. He was going away sadly, and not without dignity, when a white man who lived in Litchfield and happened to be at the inn, looked at him with pity and said to the landlady, "Poor man, he looks tired. Give him a good supper, and let him sleep somewhere, and give him something to eat to-morrow morning, and I'll pay you." The Indian was quite pleased at all this, though, being an Indian, he did not say much, but mostly grunted in several different ways, which his benefactor took to mean gratitude.

The benefactor paid his bill before leaving the inn, and then went away and forgot all about his guest. Years went by, and there came another war between the Indians and the whites. The settler who had given the tired Indian food and lodging went out

to fight and was captured by some hostile braves and carried away over the border into Canada. His captors fastened him to a tree and kept him there with the intention of killing him on the occasion of some festivity. But, to the amazement of the prisoner, one night an Indian stole up to him and gave him a musket and cut his bonds.

"Follow!" was all he said. Amazed, and yet glad at what was happening, and feeling somehow that the Indian was a friend, the white man followed him all that night. When morning came the Indian made him hide and rest in the forest while he went somewhere and got food. As soon as it was dark they resumed their journey, and alternate resting and journeying took up several nights and days. At length, early one morning, they came at the hour of dawn to a place the settler thought he recognised. When it was light enough, to his pleasure he saw he was back again near Litchfield. "Now,"

asked his Indian guide, "you know this place?" "Ah, yes, it is Litchfield." "Me," said the Indian, "been Litchfield. Me there one night, heap hungry, heap tired. Me no money, but ask lodging, beg food. Old lady heap cross. You kind, you pay good food, me eat; you pay lodging, me sleep and snore plenty. Now me pay you. Farewell." And, with that, the Indian turned on his heel, leaving the settler glad at heart and rejoicing that there was at least one Indian in the world who had taken the trouble to remember a kindness through the years, and return it when he had the opportunity.

XLVI

THE LANTERN BEARERS

Over a hundred years ago the great Count of Falkenstein was travelling in the country of Bohemia. As he travelled it began to rain. The rain became a storm, and the storm a tempest. It was too much for the brave horses that were pulling his carriage; and as night was not far off, the Count said he would stay till morning at the first inn to which they came. Before long they had reached the little village of Lakenstein; and though the inn was small, the Count and his suite and his servants were glad of its shelter.

Darkness fell, and suddenly a messenger came to tell the innkeeper of a strange happening. Bad as the weather was, several men all muffled up were moving with lanterns.

They were dark lanterns, but now and then they uncovered them to see where they were going. The innkeeper wondered whether they were robbers, and he spent a lot of time in trying to guess. At last he sent the messenger out with instructions to follow some of the lantern-bearers and to let him know where they were going; and though the messenger did not like doing it he obeyed, and passed out into the pouring rain and the howling wind. Whilst he was gone the innkeeper told the Count's servant why and where he had sent him, and the servant told the Count.

The Count was as much puzzled as the rest; and when the messenger returned they were all anxious to hear his story. He was wet and dirty, and he looked very scared. But he managed to stammer out that all the lantern-bearers had gone to a lonely hut outside the village. At the door each had knocked gently, and soon bolts had been

drawn, and the knocker had been let in. "Twelve of them have gone in, and there was one man inside already. That makes thirteen. I believe they are witches or wizards. Who knows what sorcery they are up to? Oh, dear! oh, dear! They will harm all of us, and they are sure to kill me for following them. Oh, dear!"

This was how he spoke; and some of those who heard him turned pale. The Count tossed him a silver piece of money, and told him to be less of a coward. He took the money, but it was plain that he was still frightened.

Indeed, nobody liked what his story suggested. But the Count of Falkenstein was braver than the rest, and at last he spoke up and said he was going to the hut to find out what was going on.

"On such a night, Excellency?" asked one of his suite, who was terrified at the prospect of having to go with his master.

"Certainly—at once," answered the Count. "And those of you who are not afraid will come with me. Get swords and pistols, and let us go."

His suite and servants would rather have stopped safe and dry in the inn, but they got overcoats and weapons, and sallied out into the night. The messenger went with them as guide; and, feeling rather braver than when he was quite alone, he led them outside the village and showed them the hut.

The rain was falling in sheets. The wind was shrieking gustily across the fields, and the ugly hut looked mysterious and terrible in the black night.

Carefully they drew near; and when they were quite close the Count said in a low voice, "Make a ring round the hut, and be ready to protect me if I need your help."

His attendants surrounded the hut, and got their swords and pistols ready for use. Then the Count knocked loudly at the door.

Almost at once the door opened, and by the light that streamed from within the house stood displayed an old man with an anxious face. "It is Senitz, a peasant, and the master of the hut," said the messenger, in a low voice. Senitz did not notice him. He was looking hard at the Count. "Who," he asked, with simple dignity, "comes to disturb an honest man at so late an hour?" The Count looked at him as if he were not accustomed to be spoken to thus. Then, without giving his name, he answered, "If you are an honest man you have nothing to fear. But if not . . ." And he passed into the hut. The peasant, seeing he was a great gentleman, did nothing to stop him, for in those days peasants were compelled to let those above them do much as they liked. So Senitz simply shut the door, leaving the Count's suite outside, and then he faced his unbidden guest.

Meantime the Count had been looking

amazed at what he saw in the one room of the hut. As he entered twelve peasants had risen from seats round a table and had bowed low at the sight of his fine clothes. He signed to them to seat themselves again, and then he asked what they were doing. "Excellency," said Senitz, "we be a handful of poor Protestants, and in this country we are not allowed to meet together. Still for all that it seems to us God's will that we should come together to worship Him and to read His Word. So these my brethren have come that I may read to them out of God's Holy Book." The Count was amazed at the boldness with which Senitz spoke, for they were in a Roman Catholic country, and to meet as they were doing was then and there counted a crime. Yet none of the peasants looked wicked. So the Count took a chair by the fire and ordered Senitz to go on reading just as though he had never come. He wished to find out for

himself what kind of people Protestants really were.

Senitz took the place he had left, and in devout tones he continued to read the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. The Count listened, and the beauty of the words and the reverence of the reading went to his soul, and soon he was following like one of the peasants. "Why," he exclaimed, "this is the first time in my life I have met with people who know how to read the Bible. And you are not allowed to meet like this because you are Protestants. I am often with the Emperor, and if you, Senitz, will come and see me next time you are in the capital, I will try to get you permission to come together like this whenever you like. Go to the Emperor's Palace and ask for the Count of Falkenstein. Will you do so?"

Senitz bowed low in token of assent; and when once more his face was visible those

in the hut saw that it shone with the light of a great rejoicing. His fellow Protestants looked glad also, for often had they prayed that God would so work as to give them liberty to meet and worship Him as they would. It seemed as though their prayer was to be answered; and after they had thanked God in their hearts they thanked the Count with fair words and gracious. The nobleman waved aside their gratitude; and with the spell of the little meeting still upon him he bade them farewell, and as the company bowed low in deep obeisance he passed again out into the night.

Loud and long did the little circle of God's people talk. Some asked who this Count of Falkenstein could be, for no one knew him. Others said he was evidently a great gentleman and a friend of the Emperor, and Senitz must do ever as he asked him. So one day, after the company had met again in his hut and had prayed that God would look after

him, the honest peasant set out for Vienna, which was the capital of the Emperor's dominions. His journey over, he found himself at last on the steps of the Royal palace, and he asked a servant for the Count of Falkenstein; and he wondered much why the servant smiled as if he knew all about him.

Down long passages and past many serving-men went poor Senitz, feeling ill at ease amid so much magnificence. Finally a big door was opened before him, and he saw dimly the Emperor sitting in state, and noblemen and other courtiers on either side of him. Too confused to look at him he bowed low to the Emperor, and then with shy eyes he searched right and left amid the courtiers to find the Count of Falkenstein. He could not see him; but suddenly the Emperor spoke a word of greeting, and Senitz recognized his voice. The Count of Falkenstein was the Emperor himself, and his title of Count

was just one of many titles which he used when he was travelling, and did not wish all men to know who he was. And as the honest peasant knelt and kissed the royal hand, the Emperor smiled at his courtiers, and those who felt they were allowed to do so smiled back and looked pleased.

When Senitz had risen, the Emperor talked to him kindly, and said that from henceforth his Protestant subjects were free to meet and to worship God as they thought fit; and he handed to the peasant a parchment, afterwards known as the Edict of Toleration, on which were written words meaning that no one must ill-treat or imprison Protestants in the future. Senitz, too glad to say much, murmured thanks and blessings: and with trembling hands he undid and unrolled the parchment. To his further amazement, inside was a note for five hundred florins, and some writing said the Emperor wished

it to be used for the building of a chapel. So, all glad at heart and with his soul singing praises to God and thanks to the Emperor, Senitz went back to Lakenstein to tell the good news, and there a chapel was built, and over its doorway was carved "Gift of the Emperor." Everywhere in Bohemia Protestants blessed God for His goodness, and in all Protestant homes the children were told to be true to the faith of their fathers and to behave always as Jesus Christ would wish.

XLVII

THE CHALK LINE

Lots of girls and quite a number of boys know "Treasure Island," by Robert Louis Stevenson. If you have not read it try and get hold of it, for it is really a great book.

Meantime, here is another and a shorter story by the same author, retold in our own special fashion. It comes from a less well-known volume of his, entitled "Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes." Once upon a time, according to this story, there were two grown-up sisters, both maiden ladies, who lived together in Edinburgh. They were very poor, and could therefore only afford the rent of one large room. In the middle of the room and quite opposite the door was a fireplace. There was no carpet on the floor, and on each side of the fireplace there was a single bed. Also there must have been at least two chairs. There both grown-up sisters lived together, sometimes quite nice to one another and sometimes not so nice as usual, which is rather like some younger sisters. One day these two spinsters, as unmarried ladies are sometimes called, could not agree. They began to quarrel. One said unkind things to her sister; and the

other got angry also and answered spitefully. At last one blurted out, "You're so nasty that I will never speak to you again." "I don't love you at all," replied the other, "and I don't mind if we never exchange another word." "Very well," said the other sister, more angry than ever. "Let's divide this room between us. Then you can live in your part and I'll live in mine. You keep out of my way and I'll keep out of yours, and I need never speak again to so nasty a person as you." This made the other spinster a little thoughtful, but by now so much wickedness had mounted up into her heart and she was so naughtily angry, that she retorted, "All right! I'm sure I don't care. Do you see this piece of chalk?"

She held up a piece of chalk for her sister to look at. "Anybody can see it," was the angry answer. "It is as plain as your abominable temper." Instead of adding a word, the other sister walked to the fireplace in the centre

of the wall. From the middle of the fireplace she drew a chalk line right across the bare floor to the door. Not a single thing did she say, but the other understood what was meant. Henceforth, year in and year out, a chalk line bisected the doorway and the fireplace, so that each could walk round and could do her cooking without violating the territory of the other; and the two foolish and wicked sisters lived each on her side of the line in absolute silence. At night, when everything was dark, each could hear the other breathe. During the daytime they watched each other, their meals, their general activities, their friendly visitors, exposed to a sulky scrutiny. Whether they ever made it up, the story, as Robert Louis Stevenson first heard it, did not tell; and he pictures their dreary life year after year, each on her own side of the chalk line, and expresses the hope that one fine day at a word, a look, or the approach of death, their hearts were

melted and the chalk boundary was overstepped for ever.

What do you think of this story? It is not pretty, is it? And what do you think of the two sisters? They were not nice, were they? Are there any chalk lines where you live? Have you quarrelled with any one so badly that you have drawn a chalk line between your life and theirs, and you never speak, but both live on your own side of the line in silence? If so, what do you think about confessing to Jesus that you have been very wrong in temper and then trying your best to rub the chalk line out? What do you say to being willing to forgive, and, what is harder still, to be forgiven? Are there any two boys in your class or any two girls in your school who have drawn a chalk line between themselves? If so, why not watch your chance of telling each that it is quite time their chalk boundary was either overstepped or rubbed away? All quarrel-

ling is ugly; and it is only love and comradeship, only sweet temper and kindness to each other, that are beautiful and after the mind of Christ. So if your friends have quarrelled, urge them to make it up; and set them a good example by rubbing out for ever any chalk lines that may separate you from those with whom you ought to be good comrades.

XLVIII

IN THE WISE MAN'S GARDEN

ONCE upon a time a very wise man lived in a great garden, and to him there came a couple of small girls who wished to see him and to talk with him. For a minute they talked of how God loves all children, and wishes them to be good; and then, because the wise old man knew that even the best

children tire of all talks that are too long, he sent them into his garden. "Go together," he said, "or go separately, as you think well. If you see any fruit you care to try and eat you are welcome; only do not forget the pains inside that generally come when small children eat too many unripe gooseberries. Good-bye." And he smiled and waved his hand as the two girls, going different ways, were soon lost amid the paths of his wonderful garden.

In half an hour they were back, and the face of the one was shining with gladness, and the face of the other was dark with gloom. "Well, girls," he asked kindly, "where have you been, and what have you done?" "We each found some fruit," said both the children together. "Tell me, then," went on the wise old man, "why does one of you look so glad and the other so troubled?" "Well," said the little girl with the smiling face, "I found some most beautiful fruit; and I ate just

enough not to be greedy, and I have brought one in the pocket of my pinafore for you." "Good," said the old man, as she fumbled in the pocket of her pinafore. "Now, what has the other little girl to say? Why is she so gloomy?" "Please," replied the little girl who looked so sorrowful, "I also found some fruit, and inside it was full of nasty little stones, and the stones so bothered me that I quite cried, and I brought one of the fruits for you to see what nasty things they are."

This last was very sad, so the wise old man asked the children to give him the fruit they had brought, that he might understand better. The girl with the smiling face finished fumbling in the pocket of her pinafore and handed him a beautiful grape. The girl who was gloomy felt in a pocket, which was where no one could find it except herself; and, to the amazement of the wise man, she presented him with yet another

grape. "Dear me!" said the old man, "so, one of you found grapes and liked them, and the other thought so much of the little stones inside that she cried and did not like them at all. Little girl with the smiling face, were there no stones in your grape?" "Oh, yes," she answered eagerly, "and I was very careful not to eat them, because of what mother says, but I never minded because the rest of the grape was nice." "Now, there you are," quoth the wise man to the girl with the gloomy face; "your friend was happy because she did not make any fuss about the little stones in the grapes: and you were sad because in the stones you forgot the grapes themselves. Jesus Christ likes us all to be happy, and especially He likes us not to make a fuss about little things when the big things are all right. Why, I even know some children who when they go bathing in the summer complain because the water is wet, and then say it is cold.

All this will never do. Let us give up grumbling about small things, and make the best of everything we can. What do you say, little girl with the gloomy face?" The little girl with the gloomy face was smiling by now, and what she said was, "I think I understand; and, please, I'd like some more grapes to try again."

XLIX

THE ARTIST

When my little readers grow up they will learn something about a great artist and etcher, whose name was Whistler. He really was very talented, but, like many other talented folk, he knew how clever he was. One day he and a friend went together to a great exhibition of pictures, and Whistler was very pleased to go because several of

his own pictures were on view. The moment they reached the hall the great artist took his friend straight to a canvas he had painted, and at some length he explained various points they both found interesting. Then he went to a second picture of his own, and made it quite clear what he expected his friend to admire in it. The friend duly admired, and then in the same way he was shown every one of Whistler's pictures. The artist told him what was good in each, and was pleased to have his skill praised.

When Whistler's friend had finished saying nice things about his last picture, to his surprise the great artist led the way towards the door by which they had entered. The friend was not only surprised, but sorry, for the walls were covered with other pictures by other painters, some of whom were very famous; and he wished to inspect them, and had been hoping to enjoy seeing them. So

he felt he just must say something about this; and at last he spoke. "What," he asked, "what about the other pictures?" Whistler turned and looked at him, out-and-out amazed, and rather cross. "The other pictures!" he said. "There are no others! We have finished."

What do you think of an answer like that? What kind of things do you call it? You can say some of them aloud, and the reply is sure to deserve them. Then, when you have said what you think, do a little more thinking. Do you know any children who think they are the only ones who count? What about the little girl who when she went to church asked her mother, "Mother, do you think all these people knew I was coming?" What about the boy who was fielding as long-stop, and thought all the spectators of the match had assembled to watch him? Surely both that boy and that girl are as bad as the cock who thought the

sun rose every morning on purpose to hear him crow. What about the boy who always wants the first and best share in everything, and thinks all others ought to be content to divide what he does not care to take? What about the girl at the party who will not play any games except the games she herself likes, and will only play even the games she loves so long as she is allowed to win every time? It is never the nicest children who think that no one else counts. Boys and girls who really have the spirit of Jesus are anxious that others should have even more than is their due: and our Lord again and again, in various ways, taught His disciples that the most Christian of all ways is "Others first, self last."

L

THE BASUTO

It is written in the memoirs of Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., that in 1864 there was serving in one of England's little wars against the Basutos, a tribe in South Africa, a certain Captain Bowker. This officer was one of eleven children, not one of whom was under six feet, and he was as brave as he was big. One day in a skirmish he was fired on by a Basuto, who missed him, but killed his horse. Then the Basuto turned to run away, but Captain Bowker got clear of his dead beast, and fired at the Basuto as he ran, and broke his arm. The man fell down, but when Captain Bowker came up to him he stood up stoically, like the brave man he was, to meet the death he anticipated. But Captain Bowker, being a British officer,

had no notion of killing a beaten foe; so to the amazement of the savage he bound up his arm, and then told him to get away home as fast as ever he could.

Wondering much, the Basuto hurried away as fast as his legs would carry him, and Captain Bowker thought no more of the matter. Many years afterwards the officer was one day travelling with his wife in a wagon in Basutoland, buying cattle. At sundown he halted at a kraal, and of course the Basutos crowded round to see all they could. Captain Bowker noticed that one Basuto looked at him very closely; and then, before he had time to inquire why his mother had not taught him not to stare, the man disappeared. In an hour he came back and brought his wife and all his boys and girls with him. Captain Bowker was interested to see them; but what really amused him was the number of things the man now managed to carry on his head. Actually he

had balanced on that head of his a dead sheep, and some milk and vegetables, and a bundle of firewood. Before Captain Bowker could inquire whether he did conjuring for a living, the black man surprised him by saying, "Sir, I offer these gifts to the man who broke and mended my arm," and he was not satisfied until Captain Bowker had accepted from him his firewood and the mutton and all his other presents.

Good old Basuto! Had I been there I would have asked for the privilege of shaking hands with him and with his wife, and I would have begged to be introduced to his black children; for it was really a great thing that the Basuto had remembered the great kindness of Captain Bowker, and had returned it like this. Since Jesus Christ is always anxious for boys and girls to show their gratitude, do you not think that, like the Basuto, you ought to be careful and remember the kindness of other people,

and return it when you have the chance? This is a lot better than accepting all mothers and fathers and aunties and friends give you, and not always saying "Thank you!" and sometimes grumbling because you do not think it is good enough. Suppose you get a piece of paper and put down the names of some of the people who have been kind to you, and try to think out how soon and in what way you will be able to return their kindness.

LI

THE WATER CARRIER

BEFORE the war many children had scarcely ever heard of Gallipoli; and even grown-up people did not realise how brave New Zealanders and Australians were to show themselves when they were put to the proof.

Now Gallipoli and Anzacs are linked together for ever on the scroll of history, which in letters of blood tells of gallant deeds and in darker letters lists the graves of heroes. Round about Walker's Ridge, which was near Cape Hellas, in Gallipoli, fierce fighting took place. One of the great problems of Gallipoli was the scarcity of water; and even those British children who care little for water or soap would have been very distressed at the scarcity of water for drinking and washing. At length our Government sent out thousands of gallons of water in biscuit tins; and some of these were carried to the gallant men in the firing line on Walker's Ridge.

The messenger who was carrying them was a cheery soul; and this was fortunate, for he had a particularly dangerous job. Across the country where he carried his tins with the precious fluid Turkish marksmen aimed and Turkish bullets swept.

Finally a little group of Turkish soldiers paid special attention to the water-carrier, and soon he was hit through both legs with shrapnel. Down he fell, hugging his tins of water; the next moment a bullet made a hole in the tin, and the water began to escape. By now both the soldier's legs were bleeding profusely, but he took no notice of that. Ramming his fingers in the holes in the tin he did the best he could to prevent its contents escaping; and the row he made calling for someone to bring another tin to save the water was enough to scare the Turks. "Come!" he ordered, "another tin here and pretty quick." When his comrades brought it they saw how far he himself was wounded; and with many praises they saw he was properly taken care of.

Good old Anzac! if we saw him from afar we would all of us give him a "Coo-ee," and when we were near he should have a cheer. I wonder was he an old Band of

Hoper? I hope so; and I think this story might well be told in his honour to every Band of Hope throughout the British Dominions. He had a great idea of the value of water and a noble notion of forgetting himself when faced by the need of others; and of such a sort should be the soul of all temperance and Christian teaching everywhere. So instead of letting every hurt make us sorry for ourselves in a hurry, let us remember the brave Anzac and think rather of what we can do to help our fellows.

LII

THE TWO CHIEFS

Some years ago there lived two savages who were chiefs of a cannibal tribe in the same neighbourhood. God sent a missionary where they lived, and when each heard

about Jesus Christ he knew his past life had been wrong. So both of them became Christians, and for them there was no more man-eating. Yet the two chiefs never met, and the reason they kept apart was this. Before he knew about Jesus, one of them had killed and eaten the father of the other; and he was afraid lest, even though both of them had become Christians, the son of the man he had slain would kill him if ever he had the chance. But one day the missionary who had led them to Christ held a great Communion Service, and, each unknown to the other, Tamati, whose father had been killed, and Panapa, who had murdered him, both decided to attend.

The missionary belonged to the Church of England, and in that Church those who take part in a Communion Service kneel at the altar rail if they receive the bread and wine that remind all Christians of the body and blood of Jesus. Panapa, the one-time

murderer, therefore, knelt by the rail; and, before long, Tamati, not knowing he was there, came and knelt beside him. Before long Tamati caught sight of his neighbour, and great anger overcame him. He rose to his feet, he clenched his fist, and he seemed inclined to strike Panapa before the congregation. But something came over him, and he ran out of the church without hurting anyone. Soon he came back with great tears running down his face, and, taking the same place, he drank out of the same cup as the murderer of his father. And when the service was over Tamati told Panapa that he had forgiven him, and they spoke to each other as friends.

The missionary, of course, quietly thanked God for what had come to pass; and later he asked Tamati how he received the grace to do what was right. "Sir," said the chief, "I remembered how it is written in God's book that 'Thereby shall all men know

that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another.' Jesus said that, and because I remembered I had to forgive Panapa." And the missionary was content with so noble an answer, as well he might be. Have you got an enemy who has done you wrong, or who has wronged someone you love? It is so easy to hate and so hard to forgive. Just before our Elder Brother was crucified, He asked in prayer that those who were about to put Him to death might be forgiven. As He was, so the children He loves must try to be. If you have got a quarrel on now, be the first to offer to make it up. How can we expect to be forgiven if we are not willing to forgive? What is it we say in the Lord's Prayer?

LIII

THE STOLEN CORN

ONCE upon a time there was a wealthy landowner who had a steward. This steward looked after his whole estate, and saw that the land was ploughed, and the fruit was gathered, and the corn was reaped; and for this work he was paid much money. Unfortunately, he was not honest, and he argued with himself and persuaded himself that it did not matter if he stole so long as he was not found out. So every time he had a chance he filled a big pocket in his coat with seed corn from his employer's granary; and he took the stolen corn home until he had sufficient wherewith to sow a field he himself owned. At the sowing time he sowed, and while the steward was busy over so many things that he scarcely ever

found time to go near it, the corn sprouted and grew green and turned to yellow.

At the time of harvest the steward said to himself, "That was splendid seed corn I stole. And though I have not been near it lately I know it will have filled my whole field with magnificent wheat. The ears will be full, and the straw will be strong. I will go and see it for myself. How foolish are they who say it is wrong to steal!" Thinking thus, the steward went his way to the field, humming aloud to himself with such gladness that he could not hear anything except the noise he himself was making. When he came to the field it was as he had expected, glorious and beautiful and yellow with the waving corn; and he ceased humming in sheer delight at the splendour of what he saw. But soon his delight had left him. All children know how fields of ripe corn whisper and whisper as they sway in the wind. This whole field seemed to

be whispering, and the stir and bowing of the wheat appeared to the guilty steward to whisper again and again the one word "Thief! Thief-f! Thief-f-f!" Alarmed, he closed his ears for a moment; and when he took his fingers away again the wheat was still murmuring "Thief! Thief-f!" Terrified to the very soul of him the dishonest steward ran away from the field and confessed his sin, and was sent to prison for the crime of stealing the seed corn.

Who can interpret this parable? For, of course, it is a parable for children, and not a story that is true in every part. Do my little readers know a passage in the Bible which says, "Sin is deceitful above all things"? This is worth remembering, because very often indeed when we are tempted to sin wrong-doing seems to promise all sorts of advantages, just as the stolen corn made the steward think all would be well when his field was waving with golden

wheat. Yet often when folk persist in wrong the time comes when, despite everything seeming successful, conscience wakes up, and they are bound to accuse themselves, and they think that everyone is looking at them, and everything round about reminds them of the wrong they have done. You cannot sin without being found out sooner or later. The best way to be sure that nothing like that which came to the steward will ever happen to you is to ask God to help you always to do what is right. Always sin means hurt, and often punishment. But the memory of right-doing continually means help.

LIV

THE PICTURE

On the wall of a room in a certain house there hangs a picture of Jesus and the Jewish mothers and children of Salem. Our Lord is standing up in an attitude of welcome, with His arms outstretched towards the boys and girls, and some of the children are smiling at Him and some moving towards Him, and some are shy and some are a little afraid. Into the room where the picture is a lady one day took her own children—three girls and a boy; and she led them to the picture and told them afresh the story they knew so well. If you think, you will remember the story; or you can read all about it in your New Testament. Turn up Matthew xix. 13-15, Mark x. 13-16, and Luke xviii. 15-17. These passages

contain all we are told. When the mother had made sure all her children had its story well in mind, she pointed out the details of the picture and had something nice to say about each. It was her youngest little girl who asked most questions, but everybody enjoyed what mother said.

Among the figures in the little group the picture showed standing before our Lord was a Jewish mother and her small girl. This mother was evidently very anxious her little girl should put her hand in that of Jesus and speak to Him, but the little Jewish maiden seemed not quite willing to do as her mother wished. So taking hold of her arms at the back her mother was gently pushing her towards Jesus. The English mother, who was explaining the picture to her children, drew the especial attention of her youngest daughter to this Jewish mother and her little girl. "There, dear," she said to that youngest daughter

of hers, "the mother in the picture is pushing her little girl towards Jesus. That is what your mother is always trying to do with you, and——" The lady suddenly stopped speaking and looked at her little daughter alarmed, for the little girl's face had become very solemn, and the next moment her little lips were trembling and her little eyes had filled with tears. "Oh, mother," she said reproachfully, "you don't think I wait to be pushed, do you? I don't wait to be pushed to Jesus, I really don't. I'm always trying to get to Him without being pushed." Then there were more tears, so that her mother had to gather the small maiden into her arms and say nice things to her and comfort her, after the way of all good mothers everywhere throughout the world.

Do you not think the little girl deserved comfort? And was it not splendid for her to explain that she did not wait to be pushed

to Jesus? I wonder whether any of my little readers are waiting to be pushed. When mother has to scold you for being naughty, she does not scold because she likes scolding. Not only her scoldings, but also her punishments, are really her love helping you to be good; and punishments and scoldings alike are her ways of pushing you towards Jesus. Then when you feel that mother very much wants you to do something that is right, but somehow you yourself do not care to do it, mother is trying to push you to Jesus. Why wait to be pushed? Why not away inside yourself think quietly of all Jesus is and of all Jesus wants boys and girls to be? And why not go to Him of your own accord and give yourself to Him forever?

LV

NORMAN

All my little readers will know a great deal about Captain Scott and his party, and about their getting to the South Pole on January 18, 1912, and about the death of the heroes on the return journey. All will have remembered to pray for the children of the dead heroes; and some of them will know that the first to die was Petty-Officer Evans, of the Royal Navy, who was in charge of the sledges of the expedition, and died on February 17, 1912, at the foot of the great Beardmore Glacier. The other day I was in Wales, where I bought a Cardiff paper called *The Evening Express*, and from it I learnt much that is not being told here. The home of Petty-Officer Edgar Evans was at Pilton, near Rhossilly, twenty miles from Swansea

by road. At Pilton still live his widow and his three children. It is always terrible when the widow of a dead hero hears about his death, even though she may know that her loved one has passed from the Antarctic snows quite close to the great white throne; and one of the worst things that Mrs. Evans has had to face has been the telling of the children that here on earth they will never see their dear father any more. Poor Mrs. Evans has faced this great ordeal, and much her children said to her must have comforted their mother.

One of the young children of Petty-Officer Evans is called Norman, and instead of telling him at once the sad news, his mother waited until Norman was in bed. Then very lovingly she told the little man all that it was good for him to know. At first he scarcely realised what it all meant, for it is over a year since he saw his father last. So his first reply to his mother was, "Oh,

well, he will never be home any more, mammy, but I shall see him in Heaven." At this Norman's mother began to cry, and Norman remembered how his father had loved her, and how he had worked so that he might bring her money with which she used to feed and clothe her children; and though the little chap did not realise all that was meant by his father's death, he began to feel that someone must take his father's place and somehow get money for his mother. So with eyes full of sympathy, he looked at his mother's tear-stained face, and then the little man spoke up bravely and said, "I must work hard for you now, mamma."

Was not that a splendid thing to say? And do you not think that Mrs. Evans must have been helped much by her boy's devotion? Blessings on the little man, and may he grow up to be a real comfort to the mother he loves. Between now and Norman's being able to work for her there

will be much he can do to make her life happier, and it is certain that Jesus will help him whenever he tries to do it. If any children who have read this true story have got a mother and not a father, let them learn from it to do all they possibly can to help their mother; and if there are any boys and girls who have a father but not a mother, let them be extra kind to him for quite a long time. And all children to whom God has spared both parents will do well to be just as nice to them as ever they can. Particularly when mother is sorrowful or father is sad, it is worth while to go up and put a little hand where it is often put and just say, "Oh, I am so sorry for you, and I mean to help all I can." Mothers especially are always comforting their boys and girls. Let us not forget that sometimes children ought to pray a little prayer which asks God to help them to comfort a parent.

LVI

THE HELPER

Once upon a time there was a little girl who had a bishop for grandfather, and very often she sat upon his knee and said things about his apron, and asked many questions about gaiters. The dear old gentleman was very pleased with everything she said, and often he talked to her about Jesus and concerning being good and about prayer. One day the bishop told her that the prayers of little children often help grown-up people; and so, without saying anything to anyone, the small girl made up her mind that grandfather should be helped by her praying. The next Sunday evening the bishop was to preach in a great Cathedral, and because he was old and not at all strong, he and those who loved him were very anxious about his

sermon. Little girls are very often put to bed about the time of Sunday evening service, and this little girl never went to evensong. So though she would much have liked to have heard her grandfather preach, she was not only left at home, but was even put to bed rather earlier than usual, because her nurse wanted to attend the service.

Of course, in her evening prayer she remembered her grandfather, and then, after she was all alone in her bed, she kept on praying until she went to sleep that God would help the bishop to preach, and that everybody in the Cathedral might be helped to listen. The next morning her grandfather was waiting in the breakfast-room, and at once she asked in her own way about the sermon the night before. The bishop took her up and kissed her, and said, "Little one, all the time I was preaching I felt as though God was giving me extra strength

every minute, and though I am tired this morning it was worth the effort, for so many people seemed to be helped." Just then some other folk came into the room, and the aged bishop had to talk to them. Three Sundays later he preached again in the same Cathedral, and once more his little granddaughter prayed, without anyone except God knowing what she was doing, and once more the good bishop was conscious of extra help. He did not, however, preach again for quite a little time, because his doctor said he must not. And on the afternoon before the next evening on which he gave a sermon in the Cathedral a sad thing happened. His little granddaughter was out-and-out naughty. She said things she shouldn't, she behaved spitfiery, and she cried a lot out of sheer temper.

Fortunately the bishop knew nothing about all this, for it took place in a room right away from where he was preparing for

the evening service. Before going out to the Cathedral he came in to say good-night, and he was too intent on what was before him to notice red eyes and other marks of what had been going on. The little girl was undressed, and rattled through her prayers anyhow, scarcely meaning them at all, and when she was in bed she did not feel sufficiently friends with God to pray for grandfather and his sermon. So feeling very miserable, and with a sense of naughtiness all over her, she fretted herself to sleep. The next morning the bishop was not at breakfast, and when she asked about him, they said, "It was such hard work for him to preach his sermon last night, that he is very tired, and must stay in bed. It is very strange, but he said he did not seem to be helped like the last twice." At this the little girl felt she did not want any breakfast, and as soon as it was possible she went away up to her own room, and told

God how sorry she was for everything, and asked to be forgiven. Then later in the day she told her grandfather all that has been written here. For a moment the bishop's eyes looked so strangely bright that the little girl thought he was going to cry. But instead he drew her very close to him and said very solemnly, "Ah, dearest, little people should never stop praying for grown-ups, for they never know how much strength their prayers bring to those whom they love. Sometimes I think that God has special help which He will only give to older people in answer to the prayers of children."

LVII

THE GENTLEMAN

It is written in the biography of the late Dr. Paget, Bishop of Oxford, that he was accustomed to send long letters to his son, Bernard Paget. These letters described his ordinary work as Bishop, and were written at odd moments in railway waiting-rooms and places like that. Once, because he had no other news for his boy, he told him the following story. Dr. Paget had just been to a place near Slough, where lived a clergyman who some time before had prepared some navvies for Confirmation. Though Confirmation is not a Scriptural ceremony, members of the Church of England are often much helped by it, and while being prepared for Confirmation they learn a great deal about Jesus and the good life. One

of the navvies whom the clergyman near Slough prepared, not only learnt to love Jesus, but grew quite attached to his earthly teacher; and some time afterwards, to the surprise of the clergyman, the navvy made a journey all the way from Nottingham to near Slough so that he might interview his friend. When he saw the clergyman the workman was very embarrassed, and all that he said for some time was, "I have got to beg your pardon." Of course the clergyman answered that he did not think that was at all likely; but the navvy stuck to it, though he found it very hard to say why. Presently something he said made the clergyman think that perhaps his navvy friend had been abusing him or laughing at him and was sorry. But when he inquired he found this was not the case. At last out things came. Some of the other navvies with whom the clergyman's friend had worked whilst he was being prepared for Confirma-

tion had made fun of his deciding to be a Christian, and had said unkind things about his being confirmed. They had even attacked the character of the clergyman; and the navvy, discouraged by their taunts, had not stuck up for his friend. When afterwards he thought about this, he had realised not only that he was something of a coward, but also that he was not fair to the friend who had done so much for him. The more he thought about it the more his cowardliness and unfairness in failing to stick up for the clergyman came home to him; and so at length to ease his mind he had come all the way from Nottingham to Slough to beg pardon from the friend for whom he had not stuck up.

Bishop Paget, in telling the story, said that the navvy was a great gentleman; and surely all my little readers will agree. Jesus loves us to have friends, and through the way we care for those who love us He

often makes more clear His love for boys and girls. The friendships most to His mind are those which mean that friends always stick up for one another; and it is a mark of real comradeship to stick up for a friend when he is attacked behind his back. When in the playground other children say things about your friends, are you afraid to stick up for them, or do you speak right out and say what you think? Children who allow their friends to be maligned in silence grieve the heart of Jesus; and if they are really good boys and girls, they are sure later to have an awful mood of penitence like to that of the navvy. Think and pray about this, and behave accordingly.

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